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THE REFUGEES:

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A SEQUEL TO

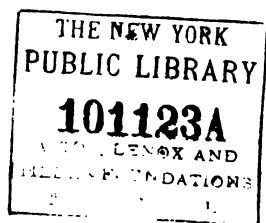
“UNCLE TOM’S CABIN.”

BY

ANNIE JEFFERSON HOLLAND.

AUSTIN, TEXAS:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.
1892.

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RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED TO
THE OLD SOUTH
BY ONE OF HER
DEVOTED DAUGHTERS.

PREFACE.

In the Century Magazine of 1888, I was attracted by George Kennan's account of the Russian "politicals"—cultivated scholars exiled to Siberia; and, according to Mr. Kennan, suffering refined torture from extreme poverty and by being brought in contact with a low grade of convicts.

I write this to show what a parallel case Mr. Kennan could find in his own country, where a refined cultivated people were thrown down in extreme poverty in the midst of a coarse African race, whom slavery barely rescued from cannibalism.

Charles Dickens, in a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe, referring to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," writes: "If I might suggest a fault, in what has so charmed me, it would be that you *go too far* and *seek to prove* too much. I doubt there being any warrant for making out the African race to be a great race, or for supposing the future destinies of the world to be in that direction."

If Mr. Kennan can enlist as much sympathy for the "politicals" of Russia as Mrs. Stowe did for the Africans of the South, who were simply being civilized, the philanthropist of the North will soon have an "underground railroad" under Behring Strait; or maybe it would do

as the Red Sea of old, and they could walk dry shod over into the Land of Canaan.

"THE REFUGEES" is a story composed of *real facts*, a chain of *authentic instances*, woven together, forming a perfect sequel to "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

A Southern woman, who lived through it, knowing it as it was and is, writes the story.

THE AUTHOR.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, 1889.

EXPLANATION.

I expect many of my readers will think I should, like Tom Sawyer, have brought "Uncle Tom" back to life in the regular way before making him the hero of another story, but as Mrs. Stowe *crucified* him, I have the right to *resurrect* him for the benefit of THE REFUGEES.

I do not mean this as sacrilegious.

Mrs. Stowe tells us she was at the Lord's supper, taking holy communion, when she conceived of and was inspired to write of the horrible, cruel whipping to death of poor Uncle Tom. We may well believe she was under just such fanatical inspiration when she wrote that chapter, for she literally crucified him between two black brutes, who repent, are converted, etc., thus carrying out the whole figure of the crucifixion.

There were many cases of brutal punishment, no doubt, and the same class of negroes that received it are now filling our penitentiaries and carving right and left with the *deadly razor*.

Fortunately for the old Southerners, there were many Uncle Toms who faithfully cared for us during that cruel war.

It was not strange for a woman, with an overwrought religious temperament, to have written "Uncle Tom's

Cabin," but it was strange that the whole world accepted it as true. Reason seemed to have been completely overthrown by fanaticism and maudlin sentiment. No one seemed to have an idea of the civilizing effect of slavery, and that at its very worst it was far better for the negro than Africa.

When reformers and philanthropists learn the justness and gentleness of the Great Reformer, we will hear no more of crucifixions and inquisitions. *or Slavery*

Nothing stands so much in the way of progressive evolution as superstition and fanaticism.

THE AUTHOR.

THE REFUGEES.

CHAPTER I.

IT was the fall of 1860. The sun had sunk like a huge ball of fire in the west, and the full moon was rising, as the "New Uncle Sam" touched the wharf at Memphis, Tennessee.

A gay crowd of Southerners boarded her, returning from the North, where, as usual, the summer had been loitered away.

They had lingered late this season, and it was now October, the air was crisp and exhilarating. The party seemed eager for home, and their enthusiasm rose as the band on deck greeted them with Dixie, then new, and heard for the first time by some of the travelers.

The urbane officers of the boat evidently felt flattered at having such distinguished passengers, and as they had been notified before leaving Cairo, and staterooms engaged for the party, everything was in readiness.

While the gentlemen lingered at the clerk's office, the ladies took possession of the elegant cabin, and throwing themselves on the luxurious sofas and divans, drew no very favorable comparison between the horrid, dusty cars they had just left and their own beautiful river boats.

The captain coming in, seemed highly pleased with their comments, and shook hands all 'round, as if meeting old acquaintances, for it was not the first time they had traveled with him up and down the river.

"Yes," said a bright, golden-haired girl, "Captain, we were just saying the New Uncle Sam is really and truly a floating palace; and the moment my feet touched the gangway I felt like shouting 'Home again!'"

"Oizelle feels a kind of ownership in your boat, Captain," said her father, coming in just at that moment with the other gentlemen of the party. "She never ceases to sound the praises of the New Uncle Sam."

"And we have the same feeling toward Miss Carrington, Doctor. We have passed her back and forth to school so often, we now welcome her as one of our boat's crew."

Just then one of the clerks of the boat came timidly back, blushing and smiling, to shake hands with the young lady.

"Oh! Mr. McDougal, how do you do? I knew you were on board as soon as I heard that band playing Dixie. How kind of you to give us such a welcome! I have been wishing I was in the 'land of cotton' for weeks past."

And while this rather democratic demonstration was going on, a stylish young gentleman stood by the side of Miss Carrington, twirling his cane, as if he could break it over the head of that clerk.

"Well," said the clerk, "you will soon be home now. In the meantime I hope you will find everything to your taste on board. We have a new piano, and you must favor us with some good music." Then bowing and returning to his duties, certainly didn't look the presumption of which St. Clare Willard was ready to accuse him.

As all was bustle and preparation for supper just then, and the ladies retiring to their comfortable staterooms, to change uncomfortable traveling dresses for dainty evening costumes, St. Clare asked, with a little air of authority, "Oizelle, will you come on the guards?"

"I will scarcely have time before supper."

"Just one moment. See, what beautiful moonlight! You are so lavish with your attention to everyone else. What right has a clerk of a boat to speak to you?"

"Why, St. Clare! Did you never know the history of my acquaintance with Mr. McDougal?"

Just then, as they turned on the guards, they came upon Dr. Carrington and General Hunt, seated in the moonlight.

"Why are you young people looking so serious?" asked the General.

"I was telling St. Clare why the clerk of the boat and I were such good friends."

"Well, tell us about it."

"Summer before last, when the yellow fever raged so terribly in New Orleans, father couldn't leave to take me back to school. Mother concluded to send me alone, in charge of the captain of this boat, and telegraphed our friends in Memphis to meet me there; and I was on board, trunk, maid and all, before we knew the captain was not on that trip—had died of the fever—and the clerk was taking the boat back. I was so eager to get on to school I would go; and oh, what a trip! I was the only passenger except a retired actress and an abolitionist! You know the fever prevented travel, and imagine my consternation when, by some accident to the machinery, we were detained, and instead of reaching Memphis at 6 p. m. it was after midnight."

"And what in the world became of you?"

"Why, that good, kind clerk left his boat, put me in a carriage, and deposited me safe and sound at the Gayosa, where I staid till my friends called for me. — But I must go and get ready for supper. The ladies are out, looking as fresh as if they had never heard of a train of cars." And as Oizelle, lithe and graceful, disappeared into her stateroom, St. Clare walked with a clouded brow back to the cabin of the boat.

"Doctor," said the General, "that daughter of yours has a remarkably fine face."

"Ah, yes; and but an index to her character. She has developed so rapidly, I can scarcely realize she is a child no longer."

"Will she and St. Clare marry this winter?"

"No, no! He has to get his profession yet, and she will return to school to complete her art course — all provided, you know, General, Lincoln is not elected."

"Yes, yes. Weightier questions than that depend on this November election."

"I consider, General, it is a question no longer; the time has come to act. The South must not only assert her rights, but maintain them."

"Aye! she will; though war is fearful to contemplate! Judge Willard didn't go North this summer?"

"No, not even to see his son bear off the honors at Yale; the old Judge is very much embittered against the North, and is ready even now to secede."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Judge, "he has spent quite a fortune there, educating his children, and donating to them in one way and another."

"I am afraid a very bitter experience is in store for him, and one that will touch me and mine even deeper."

The Doctor's handsome, cheerful face grew sad, as he laid his hand confidently on the General's, and in a low tone asked:

"Do you see any change in St. Clare Willard?"

"A complete metamorphosis, Doctor. I have been watching him for 'Zelle's sake. You know she is a great favorite of mine, and St. Clare, too; he was such a manly boy."

"I much fear his three years at Yale bodes no good for my daughter's happiness."

"Let us hope home influences will soon dispel"—

"Ah! my daughter, how refreshed you look."

"Have you and the General been sitting here all this time? I do hope you haven't been talking politics."

"Has my little friend's trip North given her a distaste for politics? It seems to me I remember her as a fire-eating, States-rights little Democrat!"

"And so I am, General; just see, if Lincoln is elected, how I will pin the cockades on our boys, and start them out to fight for State's rights! I would go myself if—Ugh! St. Clare, how you startled me, I didn't know you were behind me."

"And so you think you would make a dashing soldier boy, do you?"

"No, no, I didn't mean that."

"Well, I think you look infinitely more lovely just as you are."

"Thank you. I was just chiding father and the General for talking politics in this lovely moonlight."

"Come, now," said the General, "we are not as young as you and St. Clare."

"Nor as foolish?" asked 'Zelle.

"At any rate, we will enjoy it while we are young," laughed St. Clare. And as he led Oizelle away, they certainly looked as handsome a couple as the gods ever made happy for a little while.

Mrs. Carrington, attracted by the conversation, now stood by the side of her husband, looking scarcely older than her daughter, but nothing like; in fact, Oizelle was the image of her father. The same dark blue eyes, with long dark lashes, golden brown hair, and a shaped head that would have charmed an artist; her expressions so ideal, her whole carriage so noble, that all remarked it, and gazed in perfect admiration.

St. Clare was equally as handsome, with dark blue eyes, chestnut hair, and a figure tall and graceful.

They had known each other from childhood, and he embodied to her mind every ideal of which her fine spiritual nature could conceive. Her first unhappiness had been when his father had insisted upon his going to Yale, while she wanted him to stop at the University of Virginia, simply to be nearer her, for she had never been farther North to school than Tennessee, and her summers were made glorious sunshine by St. Clare joining them in Virginia at the White Sulphur Springs or all going together to Saratoga.

The Doctor and General Hunt, taking Mrs. Carrington into their confidence, continued their conversation about St. Clare, so suddenly interrupted by the young people themselves.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Carrington, "there is no change in St. Clare. You think of him as a beardless, rollicking boy, whereas during these three years he has been developing into a man, as Oizelle has into a woman; he was always a fine student, and different from other boys, just as Oizelle is different from other girls."

General Hunt saw how blinded the mother was, and hoping all would be well, said:

"At any rate he is thoroughly in love, and jealous of

every look, even of the poor little clerk here on the boat! She is a beautiful woman. I have often thought I would ask where you got her name."

" 'Oizelle,' General, is an abbreviation of 'Mademoizelle.' "

" I see," said the General.

" Her French maid, Angelique, the girl we have with us, gave her the name; or rather Angy called her little mistress Mademoizelle; we abbreviated and coined the name Oizelle. Did you ever notice Angy, General? She is one of the finest maids a lady ever had, and I believe she would lay down her life for Oizelle."

" You take your servants North with you? "

" Yes, Tom and Angy. I would like to see the whole Abolition party combined get either one of them to leave us. Tom acts upon principle, but Angy simply from attachment. She is a most remarkable character, and a real genius—she sings the finest operas, speaks French like a Parisian."

" Why, where did you get her? "

" I think she must have belonged to a French opera troupe—an attache, ladies' maid, or something. She could tell us nothing of the past when we got her. I first saw her at the French Market, in New Orleans, early one morning. I was sipping my coffee there, she was begging a cup of chocolate. I was attracted by her wild, haggard look, and found she frequented Jackson Square, and hung round the Catholic Church to listen to the fine music, and would occasionally burst out singing equal to Jenny Lind. My sympathy became so enlisted, I made inquiry and found she had nearly lost her life, and did her mind, from a spell of brain fever. I found the old Frenchman who had her in charge, and told him I believed a good home and change of air would cure her. He was delighted to get rid of her, so I took my crazy 'nigger' home with me. She soon got well, and has been a faithful attendant ever since. But come, let's go in to supper, and then we will go on deck and have Angy sing for us."

Who that ever traveled on the Mississippi in the good

old days of Lang Syne can forget the magnificent suppers served on the first class boats?

The cabin converted, as if by magic, into an elegant dining room, where the numerous round tables and long tables, with damask and silver, glistened in the light of the chandeliers; and the waiters flying here and there seating the numerous passengers, who looked more like invited guests to some magnificent banquet than tired travelers homeward bound.

Our party had collected from the different parts of the boat, and took possession of the captain's table.

"Where is George?" asked Mrs. Carrington. Before anyone could reply the young man answered for himself by putting his hands playfully over his mother's eyes.

"Oh! here you are, sir; I thought you would be in time for supper. Where have you been all this time?"

"I have been on deck with Uncle Tom; we have been counting the hours till we reach home, and with a good run we may take supper this time to-morrow evening with Aunt Chloe. Wont that be jolly?"

George Carrington was a bright, curly-headed boy of sixteen, as much like his mother as his sister was like her father. Warm-hearted and impulsive, he was the pet at home of black and white.

"As much as we will enjoy getting home, I should think you would be ready for your supper now."

"No, I am not a bit hungry, I am so eager to get home. Father, I never want to go North again. I think it's foolishness Southern people trailing up North every summer."

"We will not hear you saying that when you get a few years older, George," said St. Clare. "You will be for taking the honors at Yale some day."

"Not I!" said George, with a curl of his lip, "I can learn all I want to know at home; if not, I will go to Europe. I think it time Southern people were keeping their money at home, and building up their own institutions. I agree with Judge Willard, and I bet he has had a better time at Lake Pontchartrain than we've had at Saratoga."

St. Clare grew confused, and Dr. Carrington, with a quick glance at his daughter, assisted her in turning the conversation into a lighter channel.

"Captain, you have a fine band on board; we might have a dance after supper."

"The young people will be sure to arrange that, Doctor. We have a magnificent piano, too; we must have some music on that."

Tables and dishes soon disappeared, and again the cabin was an elegant drawing room; ladies and gentlemen clustered here and there, some playing chess, backgammon, and different games of cards; some tete-a-tete in close conversation, and while all seemed to be enjoying themselves, our clerk of the boat made his appearance with a roll of music, insisting on Miss Carrington's playing, as the musicians were then having their supper, and after that dancing.

Oizelle knew well how to please, and, without hesitating, seated herself at the piano and delighted her audience till the band struck up a lively waltz. Then, St. Clare taking her hand, she rose and, with perfect symmetry of motion, they whirled down the long saloon. Others caught the infection and couple after couple joined the giddy maze.

"Now," said St. Clare, as they found an easy egress to the guards, "you have done your duty for the evening, come out into the moonlight."

"For awhile, but I have promised General Hunt a square dance."

"Nonsense! let General Hunt dance with his own wife. I tell you Oizelle, I feel as if something or somebody was coming between us all the time! My darling, I wish we were married now. I wish we could go to Paris for the winter."

"Why, St. Clare, how could we? You with no profession and I not com——"

"You are complete enough, and what do I want with a profession?"

"Oizelle! St. Clare!" called George, "Come, General Hunt is looking for you; the set will be filled."

"Let it," said St. Clare.

"No, we must n't be so selfish," said Oizelle. "I'm coming, General. Come, St. Clare, get a partner and be our vis-a-vis."

"No, I don't want to dance," and with a heavy foreboding, a presentiment of coming evil, St. Clare seated himself in the shadow of the boat, and held commune with his own dissatisfied nature. He was startled to find how reluctantly he was going home; how uncongenial everything was to him; how Oizelle was the only link that bound him to the South. And as quick as he could claim her, he would go North, to Europe, anywhere, to get away from this discord, this political strife. He was startled out of his musings by Oizelle standing by him.

"Come, St. Clare, everybody has gone on deck, do let's go up to the pilot's house. This is the most glorious night I ever saw."

He followed her mechanically, and she, with a true woman's instinct, felt, rather than saw, that St. Clare was changed—he was keeping something a secret from her. But, with woman's tact, she drew him on, trying to entertain him, with so much skill he was soon laughing, enjoying the night, and when Angy began to sing, declared he had rather hear Angy sing Norma than go to the opera. But as his spirits rose, Oizelle's would have sunk, had she not been too proud for even her father to see that she was suspicioning St. Clare. If her idol was crumbling the fact must be locked in her own breast. But, no, she would not believe it; it could not be possible, St. Clare could not be recreant to the South! No right-thinking, unprejudiced mind could be! She would help him to come to right conclusions. She would remove educational prejudice. No, no! her idol must stand. And as she looked at him in the moonlight—so handsome, so graceful—she struggled to banish all doubts and believe he was as perfect in character as in form and feature.

It was so delightful on deck, the moon shining so gloriously bright, and the boat gliding down the river with such luxurious ease, it was late before our travelers could force themselves down, and it seemed a real sin to have

to go to bed and shut out so much of nature's loveliness. Is there anything more beautiful than this world? Moonlight, starlight, sunshine, water, air, earth, sky. All too lovely for discordant man. Discord! Learn to accord, fit our souls to the "music of the spheres," and we have heaven here.

But our passengers slept. The moon rose higher and higher, and the New Uncle Sam glided on, passing farms, towns, in a swift descent towards New Orleans.

CHAPTER II.

OIZELLE was out bright and cheerful next day, in spite of a restless night spent twixt doubts and fears.

As the boat approached Vicksburg, a general rush for the guards ensued to see who would get on. Quite a number of passengers were waiting, and Oizelle walked to the front with her father and General Hunt, and as they got a good view of the wharf, they all exclaimed:

"Why, there's Terrill! Vernon Terrill! There must be some political meeting near about; what a speaker he is!" And General Hunt rushed away to meet his fellow-statesman, grasping him by the hand, shaking and talking, until Mr. Terrill, spying Dr. and Miss Carrington, made for them, saying:

"Well! I am delighted to find you all on board," giving them a cordial handshake, and looking the admiration he felt for the young lady.

"Miss Carrington, I consider myself more than fortunate."

"You see, we were looking for you; we came to the front to meet you," said 'Zelle rather archly.

"I would be too much flattered by such attention," said he, bowing and smiling.

"What has kept you so late, Doctor? I was beginning to think you were preparing to desert, and meant to stay North."

"No, we thought may be it would be the last time, and we had better make out our visit. How is Mississippi?"

"Ready, sir; ready for any emergency!"

"I hear you are doing noble work; get rid of your traveling paraphernalia and come back to the ladies' cabin; we want to hear all the news, and the ladies, bless their souls, are as eager as any of us."

Vernon Terrill was the embodiment of a young Mississippian. A graduate of Oxford, talented, eloquent, the rising young orator of that never to be forgotten campaign.

General Hunt loved him like a son, and as he walked back to the ladies' cabin he said:

"Well, Miss Carrington, what do you think of the eagle orator of Mississippi?"

"I think he is just as handsome as a picture; hasn't he the blackest eyes you ever saw?"

"I know he has the handsomest eyes I ever saw."

But St. Clare had gained the side of Oizelle, and answered:

"Oizelle, my eyes are blue."

The General chuckled to himself as he walked off and thought, "Now, my young renegade, you have got something to be jealous of. If the poor little clerk of the boat puts you on the alert, what will become of you now?"

"Say, General," said George, rushing up, his face flushed and eyes twinkling, "did you know Vernon Terrill came on at Vicksburg? 'Rah for State's rights!' and George's hat went up against the top of the cabin."

"George! George!" cried his mother.

"Let the boy alone," said the General, "I feel like I shall have to rush up on deck and say the same thing."

"Let's clear the cabin and call on him for a speech," said George. "And where's McDougal? We will have the band play Dixie."

And George went scampering off in search of McDougal.

"God bless the boy," said the General.

"Oh! I forgot," said George, running back, throwing a paper at his father, "there's the 'Vicksburg Whig' with his speech in it, spoke there yesterday; finest thing ever heard."

And away went George again to hurry up the music.

When Mr. Terrill emerged from his stateroom, George was ready, and giving Uncle Tom the signal he conveyed it to the musicians, the band struck up Dixie, and in the midst of hurrahs and congratulations, the young orator was ushered into the midst of the ladies.

Mrs. Carrington was the first to shake hands with him, and congratulating him, with tears in her eyes, said :

"I do hope we may elect our Democratic candidate, Mr. Terrill, for if not, I see no alternative but war !"

Oizelle, in the excitement of the moment, forgot St. Clare—everything but her own loved South—and springing to her mother's side, said :

"And what if it is, mother ? It has got to come sooner or later, why not be prepared for it ; let us be ready to meet it."

"Those are my sentiments," said Vernon, catching her little hand and giving it a shake.

Oizelle's face crimsoned, and he thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

St. Clare waited to hear no more, but with a scowl on his face, sought his stateroom, and shutting himself in, consigned politicians in general, and Vernon Terrill in particular, to the lower regions.

Still the ovation went on in the ladies' cabin ; ladies and gentlemen talked politics, war, sectional hatred, strife, bloodshed ! All seemed to think it had to come, and the subject possessed a peculiar fascination. Hour after hour passed and the gong sounded for dinner, and still they talked. Even Oizelle, though her heart was breaking for St. Clare, sat spellbound and talked and listened.

"How far are you going down, Terrill ?" asked General Hunt.

"I shall get off at Natchez."

"Better go down to the city with us."

"No, I have an engagement to speak at Natchez to-night. Get off with me, General ; the people will be so delighted to see you, and you being fresh from the North can give us the signs of the times."

"The North is as much in earnest as we are. My dear sir, we have a foe worthy our steel."

"So much the better. You will get off with me?"

"I believe I will."

When Natchez was reached, St. Clare was greatly relieved to see the two "big guns" depart, and congratulated himself that for the rest of the trip he would have Oizelle all to himself. He resolved to impress upon her the necessity of an immediate marriage; the necessity of getting away from this over-excited country. How happy they would be in Paris or Italy; he would take her there and bask in the sunshine of love till this war cloud spent itself. He became radiant in the very thought, and hastened out to seek her.

To his dismay, he found her with George, Uncle Tom and Angy, seated in front of Mrs. Carrington's stateroom, still talking politics. George delighting Uncle Tom and Angy by speaking snatches of Mr. Terrill's speech, and wishing he was a man, so he could take the stump.

Oizelle was equally as enthusiastic, and Dr. and Mrs. Carrington, seated in their stateroom door, were smiling at their children's enthusiasm, when they spied St. Clare coming toward the group. He was welcomed as one of the family, and Mrs. Carrington smiled on him in a maternal way, saying, "Well, St. Clare, we are nearing home; you must be right eager to see your father and sister."

St. Clare looked confused, and answered evasively.

"I hardly know where I will find them, whether on the plantation or in the city." Judge Willard had a plantation not far below Baton Rouge, joining Dr. Carrington.

"You had better get off with us, then," said the Doctor, and if they are not there, we will be pleased to have you with us."

"Thank you," St. Clare said; but turning to Oizelle, asked her if she would go on deck. "Get your hat; you don't mind the glare or the wind, I guess."

"St. Clare, we don't 'guess' in this latitude; we are more nautical in our expressions—we 'reckon,'" and she ran away to get her hat. "Now, I am ready. I like to

be on deck. I love every foot of the river from here down."

"Oizelle, you are as impulsive as a child; do you know you are eighteen years old?"

"And you think I should be more dignified?"

"No; I think we are approaching a very serious crisis in our lives, and I have brought you up here to talk about it," said St. Clare, drawing two chairs in the shadow of the great smokestack.

Oizelle's face immediately assumed a thoughtful, sad expression, and seating herself in one of the chairs, she drew her hat over her eyes, not so much to shield them from the glare as to hide the tears that would start, when she thought of the shadow that was falling between her and St. Clare.

"How long have we been engaged, my darling?" asked St. Clare, seating himself, and holding out his hand, expecting 'Zelle to put hers in it.

But she answered, looking away off in the distance, "Four years."

"And how long have we loved each other?"

"Always," she said, in the same far-away tone.

"Then, Oizelle, considering I am twenty-four years old, and the country just on the verge of a revolution, if I have to go to Europe, don't you think you had better go with me?"

"Have to go to Europe!" she exclaimed, pushing back her hat, her eyes flashing.

"St. Clare, you don't mean you would go to Europe till this question between the North and the South is settled?"

"I mean I care nothing about North or South, or anything else but you, Oizelle! I am no politician."

But Oizelle had turned so pale, and holding up her little hands, as if to ward off every word as a blow, she cried, "Oh! don't, St. Clare, don't! You don't know what you are saying! I wish you had never gone North, and then, and then"—but Oizelle's face was in her hands, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Why, 'Zelle, my darling!" exclaimed St. Clare,

"What is the matter with you? I am no politician, am I? And if there is a horrid war, you wouldn't have me go and get killed would you?"

"If there is a war, I shall expect you to do your duty," she said, rising, all her courage coming back.

"And we might disagree as to what *is* my duty. If you are to lean on me the rest of your life, don't you think you had better trust my judgment?"

"Not if your judgment has been perverted by Northern educators."

"Well, now come," said St. Clare, feeling himself a little baffled, "My little heroine, don't let's quarrel until we understand each other better. See, yonder are the spires of Baton Rouge, you will soon be home."

"Let's go down," said Oizelle. "Your father may be there."

"No; I think he is in the city; I will know to-night."

"Will you go on?"

"I think I will," said St. Clare, a little bitterly.

They descended to the ladies' cabin in perfect silence, where they found all in bustle and confusion, a great many preparing to get off, others curiously peering ashore with the hope of seeing some familiar face.

Dr. Carrington was anxiously waiting for Oizelle and St. Clare; he was not surprised to see the silent, troubled expression of their faces when they came in.

"Well," said the Doctor, "We are almost home. My daughter, would you like to go front? We may see some friends on the wharf." And drawing her arm through his, he led her away, a mute sympathy in his tone, for there was such perfect congeniality between that father and daughter one couldn't possibly be in trouble and conceal it from the other.

George was already bounding on to the wharf, hardly waiting for the boat to touch, shaking hands with everybody, black and white, declaring he never was so happy to get home. In a few moments he came running back, accompanied by a friend, who seemed more excited than George.

"Oizelle, here is Leon."

Leon Demoin was a young Frenchman, born and reared in Baton Rouge, and Oizelle was his one dream of love.

"Oh, ma chere ami!" he exclaimed, clasping her hand, "I have watched every packet that has passed down for days and days, and at last, at last, you have come! and now I have so few minutes;" and he rattled on in French all his pent up feelings, too warm and gushing to be expressed in cold English. And then begging to be allowed to come to see her at the very earliest moment, he had barely time to reach the wharf before the boat pushed off.

"Poor Leon!" said George. "'Zelle, do all the boys fall in love with you because they know you are mortgaged chattel? Even the 'Eagle Orator of Mississippi' looks with admiration upon Miss Carrington. Is n't he handsome though? Now, if I was a woman, he is the man I would fall in love with. But hustle yourself, my little sister, we will soon be home."

Oizelle went to her stateroom, where Angy was busy collecting the things. "Be sure you get everything, Angy," she said, as she tied on her hat and picked up her gloves, feeling as if the very earth was slipping from under her feet.

Her father, mother, and brother were all ready for home, laughing and talking, but her heart was too full to join them. St. Clare, too, was shut in his stateroom, even more depressed; but hearing George's wild shout to his sister to "Hurry up, we are in sight of home!" St. Clare stalked out, pale and haggard, just as Oizelle entered, flushed and nervous.

The boat landed in front of Dr. Carrington's plantation. The mansion was a grand old Southern home, set back some distance from the river, with an avenue of orange trees leading up to it.

The carriage was there, Dr. Carrington's buggy, and George's pony. "Come, St. Clare, you are going to get off with us, are you not?"

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Carrington, "just as well."

"No," said St. Clare, "I think I had better go on down."

And he bade them all good-bye like an automaton, and he felt like one walking in a dream.

CHAPTER III.

JUDGE WILLARD lived in a superb residence in New Orleans; his widowed daughter and her two children lived with him.

St. Clare was his only son. His mother dying when he was quite young, he had been idolized by his father and sister from his youth.

Judge Willard and Dr. Carrington had been life-long friends, and the marriage of their children had been looked forward to with the greatest of happiness by both families.

The Judge had been very much depressed politically for over a year; he felt perfectly outraged at the stand the North had taken against the South, disgusted with the fanaticism of the whole set, and declared he would never put his foot North again.

True to his vow, he had spent the summer at Lake Pontchartrain, and was now waiting impatiently the return of his son.

He had been in his library all the afternoon, reading speeches and dispatches from the different Southern States. It was growing dark, and as he promenaded restlessly to and fro, he was evidently greatly disturbed in mind; and wondering if it was possible the Carringtons had not returned South yet, he rang for lights.

"A highly dressed young colored man" instantly answered the bell call.

"Adolph, do you know what up-river packet is due to-night?"

"Yes, sir; the New Uncle Sam will be in about 10 o'clock."

"Then you had better have your young master's rooms in order. I rather think he will come to-night."

"Oh, yes, sir, Miss Marie thinks so too, sir, and we've got everything ready, even to the flowers in his vases, sir."

"Well, well!" said the old Judge, rubbing his hands to-

gether. "Adolph, if he does come, bring him right up here. I will wait up for him."

"Yes, sir." And Adolph hastened off to illuminate every room in the house, hoping the young master would come.

Mrs. Vance and her children were dressed with unusual taste, and while she arranged things here and there, thinking of the fastidiousness of her brother, her face was radiant with the hope of his coming.

Adolph dodged in and out.

"Yes, I am sure he will be here to-night," said Mrs. Vance. "The Carringtons always travel on the New Uncle Sam, and they can't possibly stay North any later."

A rattle over the stony pavement, a cab stopping in front of the door, and then brother and sister were locked in one long embrace.

The children were a little shy, for they couldn't know the tall, elegant gentleman for the little uncle they used to romp with.

St. Clare felt such a longing for sympathy he smothered them with kisses, and spying Adolph, smiling and bowing, felt ready to embrace him too. "Adolph, you are looking blooming."

"Thank you, Mas' St. Clare, I 's so glad to see you. But please, Master says come right up to the library."

St. Clare found home so lovely, and everything looking so familiar, he felt for the time a boy again, and went bounding up to his father.

Mrs. Vance and the children followed, and in the happy reunion all political strife was forgotten.

The old Judge felt so proud of his handsome son he actually grew jolly, and declared to him he and his daughter were growing jealous of the Carrington's, and if he hadn't come to-night, they had resolved to break the whole thing up.

St. Clare grew a little restive under this badinage, and the old Judge, misinterpreting his feelings, said quickly:

"No, no; we are as much in love with the little 'Zelle as you are, my boy, and getting rather impatient to lay legal claim to her."

"She is no longer the little 'Zelle; she is quite a tall, graceful young lady now, and with as much character as her mother."

"By my life, she is a splendid woman then! We must go up and see her."

St. Clare was thinking, "Most too much character; I'm afraid I will never be able to bend it." But the joy of being home was predominant that night, and with a little niece on each hand, he made the rounds of the house, meeting and shaking hands with all the servants. All so well dressed and homelike, it never occurred to him for the time they were the oppressed, down-trodden race he had heard so much talk of up North.

Let us drop the curtain on their domestic happiness for a little while, and feel thankful the future is veiled from their sight.

If a soothsayer could have foretold that night that in two short years that elegant home would be turned into a military barrack; that old father hanged by the neck until that refined daughter told where all the gold, silver and diamonds were concealed—not only told, but produced; while that young son wandered in foreign lands, stealing home again, bowed, crushed, to—die! who could have believed it? Happily none can foretell.

In the midst of the most exciting campaign the South ever knew, November ushered in the election of Lincoln. The South, divided before, even to the frenzy of trying to support three presidential candidates—confirming "whom the gods destroy they first make mad"—was now solid for secession.

Instead of gloom and depression, a regular carnival reigned. Men, women, and children rallied to their State colors, and resolved to die by them.

Judge Willard congratulated himself that in his old age he had a son to stand in his shoes, and he spared no money in equipping the finest regiment in his State, the banner company of which was to be led by his son.

St. Clare remained closely at home, until one morning his father came blustering into the library.

"St. Clare, my son, this is no time for books. Why

do you sit here idle? Old as I am, my blood tingles to march to the tap of the drum."

"I should think you much too old, and far too civilized, for such feelings, sir."

"What!" exclaimed the old man, turning on him, and for the first time thoughts of his son's fealty flashed upon him.

"You don't mean"——

"I mean that war is simply barbarous. And if we are not statesmen enough to settle this question, we should bow to the will of the majority."

Judge Willard had turned livid; he clutched at a chair for support.

"And is this what you have learned North? Truly I pay dearly for your education. Where is your manhood, sir? Do you talk about statesmanship when all rights and principles are trampled upon?"

"I don't propose to place my body as a target to be shot at for a race of black negroes."

"Negroes! Do you think we are fighting for the negroes? No, sir! Did our Revolutionary sires fight for the tea? No; principles, sir, principles!"

"Then excuse me, father; I don't think there are any principles worth fighting for."

The old man gazed at him in wonder, then, sinking in his chair, he pointed to the door:

"Out of my sight!"

St. Clare walked hurriedly to his room—he had prepared for just this crisis. Snatching his hat and valise, he gained the wharf and boarded a boat for Baton Rouge, fully determined to give up country, home, father, sister, everything but Oizelle; he must make one last effort to gain her.

Dr. Carrington had not been idle, and was now colonel of a regiment, subject to his State's orders, and had just reached the city on military business, as St. Clare so hastily left it.

Oizelle, since her arrival home, and especially since the election, had had no time for selfish indulgence.

With her whole heart in the cause of the South, she

was busy entertaining her own and her father's friends; busy making flags, cockades, cheering on the boys. Always thinking of St. Clare, with a prayer that he might do his whole duty to the South.

But now her father had gone down to the city, the house was quiet, and getting her hat, she stole out to a favorite seat in the flower garden. Though winter, summer still lingered in that lovely home, and roses were now blooming in perfection. As she stood by a favorite rose bush, the whistle of a steamboat made her turn and look toward the river, wishing St. Clare would come.

Rumors of the magnificent regiment Judge Willard had equipped had reached the neighborhood, and while rumor had it, as a matter of fact, that St. Clare was a captain in that regiment, Oizelle had her misgivings. So she stood trying to analyze her feelings, knowing her love for St. Clare was a very part of her existence, when Angy, hastening to her, said:

"Oh, Moizelle, did you know Mr. Willard was in the parlor, talking to Mistress, and looks just like a ghost! I am sure something terrible must be the matter!"

Oizelle sprang past Angy into the parlor, where she found her mother earnestly pleading with St. Clare, while he stood white and fixed as a statue.

Oizelle rushed to him, with both hands extended.

"Oh, St. Clare, what is it!"

He took both her hands, and leading her to a seat, said: "I have told your mother all. But neither she nor you will ever comprehend me, in this mad state of excitement."

Mrs. Carrington, thinking 'Zelle would have more influence over him, quietly left the room.

"Oh, St. Clare!" pleaded Oizelle, "I do comprehend you! It is you, judging us from a wrong standpoint."

"No, Oizelle, I do not. Now, give me a hearing, my darling, for I have been waiting at home all this time, trying to find the opportune moment when I could even hint to my family what I thought best. But it was like standing over a magazine of powder, and one word the fuse that caused the explosion."

"Dear St. Clare, the South has been in just that position for years and years, and at last it was a woman that had to apply the fuse! Harriet Beecher Stowe had as well lighted the torch and stuck it to our homes as to have flooded the country with such inflammatory literature as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' You were born here, St. Clare, you know it is false!"

"I know it is wrong, all wrong, Oizelle, but it is done! Now what next is best to be done? Not war; we are not ready for it."

"St. Clare!"

"No, my darling; if I thought war would save the South, I would not hesitate to enlist, but it will be fatal."

"You have no right to talk so. Your duty is with your State—with your father."

"If I join hands with both, will you marry me to-morrow?"

She drew away from him, and in the searching look she gave him, St. Clare read *suspicion*.

"Oh, Oizelle! why can't you trust me? I love the South, but I love you far better. It is my duty to look beyond all this and be ready to shield you when you will most need me."

"Then, St. Clare, if it is me you are thinking of, know I am willing to sacrifice everything for the honor of the South."

"Poor innocent child! My darling, the South is doomed! Trust me; fly with me to Cuba—anywhere out of this political caldron."

"St. Clare, St. Clare!"

But he heeded nothing; clasping her in his arms, he exclaimed:

"Oh! Oizelle, I could save you, but you will not. Promise me when I am gone, my darling, and the world calls me a coward, a traitor —"

"St. Clare! St. Clare! you will not go North?"

"No, no; I will never go North again. Promise me, Oizelle, you will believe nothing that is said of me, only that I love you better than all the world." And seizing a last kiss, he sprang out of the door, down the steps, on

to the river, in time to hail and board a little stern-wheel boat just passing down.

Oizelle stood transfixed.

Mrs. Carrington and Angy were in the hall trying to keep George quiet, for Aunt Chloe had listened, and knowing something very unusual was going on, sent Pete running to the sugar mill to tell Mas' George to come to the house quick as he could. And now as his mother told him of the stand St. Clare had taken against his father, his State, he was declaring he would put the traitor out. But hearing him leave the house, all ran to 'Zelle, George taking his sister in his arms.

"My poor sister, he is not worthy of you."

"Hush," gasped Oizelle, "he is suffering more than I. Poor St. Clare!"

And from that moment, though she felt as if she had turned to marble, she would never hear a word of reproach against him.

CHAPTER IV.

DR. CARRINGTON got to Judge Willard's just as Adolph flew out of the house in the greatest excitement.

"What is the matter with you, Adolph?"

"Oh! Doctor, come right up to the library, please; Master is having such a turn!"

When Dr. Carrington reached the library, Mrs. Vance was weeping and imploring her father to calm himself.

Dr. Carrington's arrival was the very best thing that could have happened for the poor old Judge; for after storming and vowing he would have his son arrested for a traitor, he sank almost helpless at the sight of the Doctor, imploring him to forgive him for bringing so much unhappiness into his family.

The Doctor, big-hearted, magnanimous man that he was, tried to console his old friend, telling him maybe it

was not so bad; St. Clare had no doubt gone to Oizelle, and she would bring him to his reason.

"And if not, Judge, even if the worst comes to the worst, we must make up our minds to bear it. This is no child's play we have gone into. Civil war means father against son and brother against brother. Your experience comes early in the struggle. I don't believe St. Clare will bear arms against the South."

"That is the worst of it!" said the Judge. "The boy seems to be full of some sentimental idea that war is all wrong! I am afraid he is a coward! A——"

"No! You are mistaken! St. Clare is no coward, and you may depend upon it, he is very fixed in his theories; it takes a sight of moral courage to stand up to them, as he is doing. Rest assured he will take care of himself. And now it is your duty to rise up in your own strength of character and help the rest of us. My poor little daughter will be the sufferer! I hope for her sake, Judge, you will let this pass as silently as possible."

The Doctor had touched the right chord. The moment the Judge was made to see how Oizelle would be affected by it, he was ready to sacrifice every feeling of his own to help the poor little girl, as he called her.

He and Mrs. Vance now mourned St. Clare as dead, and their whole affection went out to Oizelle.

Dr. Carrington transacted his business with the greatest dispatch, and hastened home to console his heart-broken child.

St. Clare made a slow, mournful journey on the little stern-wheel boat back to New Orleans. Sad as he was at leaving home and sweetheart under such trying circumstances, still he was hopeful.

He knew Oizelle would never love anyone else but him, and he pictured to himself how proud he would feel when the worst was over, slavery abolished, as he knew it would be, he could come back for his father and Dr. Carrington and prove to them that he was right. He never expected to marry until two years after leaving Yale, and he would do that yet.

He would go to Cuba—to Europe if necessary. He

didn't think he would have long to wait; the North would soon squelch this little rebellion — and he would be glad for slavery to be abolished, he never wanted to be burthened with the responsibility.

Beguiling himself with these fancies, he reached New Orleans, went to his father's banker, wrote him an affectionate letter, regretting he could not take Oizelle and his sister with him, away from all this trouble, and begging not to be censured without being understood, he bade all farewell, and took passage on a steamer then ready for Cuba.

The disappearance of St. Clare was the gossip of the city. And wherever the Williards and Carringtons were known, he was denounced as heartless and cowardly. But the country soon had too much to do and think about to gossip.

Judge Willard rose from the stunning effect of the blow and soothed his feelings by doing doubly more for his State. Oizelle considered it her duty to suffer in silence, and work the more for the happiness of others. Leon Demoin rejoiced in the downfall of his rival, and determined to win Oizelle by his courage and gallantry on the field of battle. So when General Taylor's brigade left for Virginia no braver, better soldier marched with it than Leon Demoin.

Let us drop a tear to his memory. After fighting at Manassas, Bull Run, and marching footsore and weary, he would write to Oizelle, begging her for just one letter, one little hope. Then, poor fellow, was taken prisoner, and drowned in trying to make his escape from Johnson's Island.

Dr. Carrington marched away, too, much to the disgust of George, who had to stay at home to look after things, being reminded he was the "seed corn" and must grow before he was available.

Uncle Tom went with his master to Virginia as a body servant, and Aunt Chloe felt as proud of him, as she bustled around getting everything ready for the campaign, as Mrs. Carrington did of the Doctor.

In fact, everybody was proud and cheerful; and hus-

bands, brothers, and sweethearts were sent off to the war like parties going to a marriage feast.

Mrs. Carrington remained at home, with the assistance of George, taking care of a large force of negro slaves, directing and controlling the plantation, rejoicing in the good news from Virginia, and giving aid every way possible to the Confederacy.

And thus two years of the war passed.

The idea of settling the question in sixty days had given way to the resolve to fight it out to the bitter end. The women and children were doing very well. The negroes were their true and tried friends at home, working faithfully, feeling as much interest in the success of the country as the masters themselves.

Judge Willard and Mrs. Vance and her children had left New Orleans at the approach of Farragut's fleet, and were now living on their plantation, close neighbors and friends of the Carringtons.

Oizelle found it very comforting to have them near, though they seldom spoke of St. Clare and never heard from him. The Judge was too old for military service, but gave liberally of all he had to aid the South.

Times were growing hard since the fall of New Orleans, and Dr. Carrington hastened home on a short furiough to see his family. Great was the rejoicing, but it was turned to weeping when he announced his determination to send them all to Texas.

He had had a long conference with his wife, Oizelle, and George; told them he could not stay in Virginia contented as long as they were on the Mississippi River, exposed to the marauding parties of the enemy from New Orleans.

He had made arrangements with a friend, Colonel Morrison, who would leave Red River, with several other families, for Texas on a certain day, and he would take charge of Mrs. Carrington and her family and get homes in some safe part of the State.

Dr. Carrington would only have time to help them off and go as far as Red River with them. He would leave

Tom to take care of them, and George would have to go with him back to Virginia.

George was in an ecstasy of delight, and Uncle Tom promised faithfully to take care of the family if Master thought he could do without him. Of course there never was a body servant like Uncle Tom; but so much the better reason for him to go with his mistress. Sam could take care of the Doctor and George, and so the excitement of packing and leaving their dear old home commenced.

Judge Willard could not be persuaded to go. The poor old man's spirit was almost broken. One beautiful home given up in New Orleans, he would not give up another. So, with tears and lamentations, they parted. As in the beginning of the war, they thought it for sixty days, so now they looked upon this as a little camping excursion, and so hopeful is human nature, left one of the most magnificent homes, scarcely looking back.

Poor deluded human creatures. Even the negroes were all ready and delighted to go to Texas, some leaving wives and children on adjoining plantations. And when Dr. Carrington would say to them, "You needn't go if you don't want to; any can stay who wish," all wanted to go, even one man leaving his wife and children. Mrs. Carrington said, "Dick, you had better not leave your family."

"Oh! Mistiss, I can git another family, but whar I gwyne to git a mistiss like you?"

Dr. Carrington chartered a boat, and with an eye to the sole comfort of his family, packed everything, especially their carpets, comfortable chairs and bedding. And with a secret feeling that they were leaving home forever, and he might never see them again, he spared neither pains nor expense, and gave Tom the most minute directions concerning the trip, charging him with the care of every one of the party, black and white.

Arriving at Shreveport on Red River, they procured ambulances and covered wagons, and turning their faces to the west, bade adieu to father, brother, home.

Alas! leaving father, home, fortune, forever behind.

Again came that divine dispensation, "The veil of the future can not be rent, and hope springs eternal in the human breast."

CHAPTER V.

Yes, it was a hopeful, bouyant party that left Red River on that bright June morning.

Colonel Morrison was a genial, kind-hearted man; a gallant soldier, commanding a Louisiana regiment, still he had his misgivings about Vicksburg and Port Hudson being able to stand the siege, and had said to Dr. Carington:

"I tell you, Doctor, when they do give way, it will be like the levees breaking in an overflow; this whole country will be flooded with blue coats. Better get our families to Texas."

Many others having the same fears, had started to Texas. And now the roads from Red River to the Brazos were thronged with the very best families from Mississippi and Louisiana. Wealth, aristocracy, and intellect were pouring into the "Lone Star State."

The ladies of the party shared none of these apprehensions; they believed Vicksburg would stand like Gibraltar, and deemed it their duty to make the best of everything.

When the caravan of covered wagons started there was no word of complaint. All were experienced travelers, some having just returned from Europe as the first gun was fired at Fort Sumter; others still had in their possession flannel bloomers in which they had explored the Mammoth Cave; all could tell of Saratoga and Niagara; but Texas, what of Texas? All remembered the Alamo, but what else? Were the Mexicans and Indians still there? And so they laughed at each other's ignorance, and beguiled the weary hours.

Colonel Morrison was as ignorant of Texas as any of them, but he said he supposed it was the one dry spot the dove of the Ark would light upon if let loose. At least he had heard it never rained in Texas, and that was about all he knew about it.

Oizelle reminded them of Lafitte and his buried treasure; they might search for that.

"But that would take us in gunshot of the enemy. Lafitte infested Galveston Island. No, we must keep in the background," the Colonel said.

"I do know a little more about Texas," said Mrs. Carrington. "I do know they have no navigable rivers, and I believe only one little piece of railroad."

"Well, do let's get near the railroad," insisted 'Zelle.

"We will be controlled entirely by circumstances," the Colonel said. And so they traveled on, ignorant of any particular destination, and yet making a frolic of every mile of the way.

Mrs. Carrington, Oizelle, and Angy were comfortable in a large ambulance driven by Uncle Tom. Aunt Chloe and her little gal, Liza, driven by her son Pete, formed a very important adjunct to the party, for Aunt Chloe was as great a success at camp cooking as she was in a kitchen, surrounded by all the conveniences of her art; and though the other families had their cooks along, Aunt Chloe was the chief, and superintended everything from the making the fire to cleaning the last kettle.

If it was a picturesque sight to see the vehicles and covered wagons slowly winding along the rough, hilly, piney woods roads of Eastern Texas, it was more picturesque to see them halt at noon on the bank of some little stream, while the Refugees, scattering themselves over the woods, have a regular picnic, and Aunt Chloe, with her numerous help, would astonish everyone with the splendid dinners she would spread. Though moving, each wagon carried its chicken coop, and every little farm they passed contributed to Aunt Chloe's "greed for poultry." Fried chicken, turkey steak, and turkey hash were on the daily bill of fare. And such coffee as she would drip! Always with a sigh

to think that boy Sam couldn't make no such coffee as that; she was powerful 'fraid Master was suffering for his coffee. And it was a mystery how Aunt Chloe always had coffee, if she had to mix it with just a "leetle substitute" for others, she always had a "leetle pure" for "Mistiss."

At night, when they stretched their tents, it was simply jolly. Around the camp fires the negroes would gather with their banjos and fiddles, and every night was a frolic. And so they journeyed on day after day, night after night. And is it any wonder that our "Refugees," far from the din of battle, began to lose their fear and grew anxious only to hear from the loved ones? They talked and grew more cheerful, more hopeful, and their whole interest begun to center in the new country they were traveling through.

The negroes didn't like Eastern Texas. After leaving the rich plantations of the Mississippi, they looked at the land in perfect wonder, and Uncle Tom grew real serious, thinking how they would ever make a living on such land. But Colonel Morrison encouraged him by telling him rich bottom lands were on ahead, and the prairies were fine. But as they had never seen a prairie, they understood nothing about it.

Finally they came to the Trinity, where they pitched their tents for a day's rest; to recruit their teams and hoping to kill some game, venison particularly, as they had heard deer abounded in the Trinity bottom.

As they rested there, the novelty of traveling in that particular style having about worn off, they all collected in a group, sitting around on camp stools and stumps of trees, discussing the proper locality and the necessity of stopping somewhere pretty soon. Their attention was attracted by a gentleman driving a pair of fiery bays hailing the ferryman to set him across. While waiting, he was attracted by the number and genteel appearance of the travelers. Throwing his reins to a negro boy attending him, he came forward with that elegance and suavity of manner that at once introduced him as a cultivated gentleman.

Colonel Morrison was delighted to meet one who would be able to give him some intelligent information concerning the country. The gentleman introduced himself as Colonel Harlan, a planter from the Brazos. Colonel Morrison invited him to the camp, and introduced him to the party.

All congratulated themselves upon their good luck in thus meeting an old Texan, and one who seemed to possess so much information concerning the country.

He informed them he was just returning from a saline up the Trinity, where he had some hands making salt, and had intended going by the State penitentiary, hoping to get some cloth for his negroes.

Mrs. Carrington was very much interested in this piece of information, and wanted to know if it would be possible for her to get some. The Colonel informed her it was very doubtful, and the best thing she could do with all those negroes would be to settle herself as quickly as possible, have a loom made, and put the women and children to making cloth.

That was just what they all wanted to do, if Colonel Harlan would be so kind as to tell them where they could settle.

Colonel Morrison informed him they would like to get in a healthy locality, and if timber was convenient they could build log cabins to live in. He would like to see the ladies comfortable, but would have to hurry back, as he had a furlough for only thirty days.

Colonel Harlan informed him that was the very service he was in; he was then detailed to look after the wives and widows of absent soldiers, and nothing would give him more pleasure than to take charge of these families and provide them with comfortable homes. He told them he was a large land owner; they were then in about two day's travel of his home; he lived in the most beautiful part of the State, near the only railroad in the State, and if they would go home with him he thought he could provide for them. He owned a league of land, partly in the Brazos bottom, part prairie. They might pitch their tents there and have all the land they wanted to cultivate.

This was indeed good news. Colonel Harlan informed them the land was well watered—several fine springs and plenty of timber. The negroes could soon build houses ; and so it seemed kind fortune smiled on the "Refugees."

The ladies could not help laughing and expressing their surprise at meeting such an elegant gentleman in—Texas !

Colonel Harlan assured them they would meet some of the finest people they ever saw ; they were not at the "jumping off place" by any means. Texas had plenty of room, and her hospitality knew no bounds, and so it proved in fact.

The Colonel staid in camp with them, and early the next morning they took up the line of march. Now they had some one to pilot them who knew the road and some definite destination, their spirits rose, and all pushed ahead, eager to get located. The country was growing more level the farther south they traveled, and finally, as they emerged from the timber, and a broad expanse of prairie burst upon their view, all stopped their teams and gazed in perfect admiration. The grass was green and luxuriant, flowers blooming in profusion, and in the distance could be seen little islands of trees, shade, where the fat, lazy cattle, tired of browsing, sheltered themselves from the noonday sun.

Yes, this was a land of beauty and of plenty ; and while all sat in silent admiration, Liza startled them with the exclamation :

"Law, what a clearing ! This most as big as Master's plantation !"

A peal of laughter followed, and all seemed to take heart.

Uncle Tom said it did begin to look like a pretty fine country. Liza was surprised to find, after driving miles and miles, they still had not crossed that plantation. She could never understand what had become of the trees.

"Must 'a had a mighty log rolling," she said.

Colonel Harlan had taken a special fancy to Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle. When near his home, Angy got in the ambulance with Aunt Chloe, and Mrs. Carrington in-

vited the Colonel to ride with them, as she was very anxious to talk with him about their probable arrangements.

The Colonel assured her she would find everything just as he represented it, and as they would soon be there, he insisted on her and her daughter spending the night with his family, and the next day everything could be decided.

CHAPTER VI.

JUST as the sun was setting, they approached a gate that admitted them into a large pasture, and looking down in a valley, clustered in a grove of pecan trees, they saw the pretty little white houses of "Farmingdale," the name of Colonel Harlan's home.

The Colonel got out at the gate and bade them all welcome; pointed out a beautiful camping spot in the pasture, and insisted that the ladies should all go to the house until their tents were made comfortable.

Mrs. Harlan was a beautiful lady, with several interesting children. As pleasant and hospitable as her husband, she lost no time in making the strangers feel perfectly at home. She regretted her house was not large enough to take them all in—her heart was, if her house was not.

The ladies informed her they had every comfort in camp. So when Colonel Morrison came to announce that their tents were ready, they all returned with him to camp, except Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle. Colonel Harlan insisted that they should be his guests for the night.

Early the next morning the ladies were out exploring the premises. Farmingdale was cuddled in a valley of beautiful farming land, and divided from it by a spring branch was the league of land, high and rolling, its fertile acres extending from the lovely prairie into the dense growth of the Brazos bottom.

Fertility of soil, beautiful landscape, water and timber.

Colonel Morrison and Uncle Tom were delighted, and

were not long in coming to their conclusions. Colonel Harlan simply wanted his land put in cultivation.

"There it is," he said, "do what you please with it. I have only one suggestion. I would like Mrs. Carrington to be as close a neighbor as possible."

With Uncle Tom's approval, it was decided Mrs. Carrington would build just across the branch, on a beautiful pecan ridge, protected on the north by a grove of oaks, covered with Mustang grapevines.

Oizelle was charmed with the location and immediately christened the branch "Fern Brook." It was indeed a gurgling, laughing brook, hiding in coves of fern-covered rocks, then chattering on to join the Brazos River.

Colonel Morrison was so pleased with Colonel Harlan he consigned his sister, Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Manard, and Mrs. Carrington all to his care and began to make preparations for returning immediately to his regiment.

Mrs. Gordon was a charming young married woman, with three little children. Her husband, Dr. Gordon, was a surgeon in the Ninth Louisiana, then in Virginia. She had quite a large lot of negroes, and was fortunate enough to lease a house and farm joining Colonel Harlan.

Mrs. Manard was a widow lady. Her husband had been Lieutenant-Governor of Louisiana and had died of yellow fever some years before the war. Her only son was captain of a company in Colonel Morrison's regiment. She had one daughter, a most superior young lady. She and Oizelle had become so much attached to each other on the trip, it was decided Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard would unite forces, build them a log house, and live together. In the meantime they were invited to fold their tents and make themselves at home with Colonel Harlan and Mrs. Gordon.

Everything was arranged so pleasantly and agreeably, Colonel Morrison lost no time in filling some of the ambulances with hospital stores obtained from Mexico and making his way back with all speed to Louisiana.

The other "Refugees" decided to cross the Brazos and move on farther west.

Every day Mrs. Carrington and Uncle Tom congratu-

lated themselves on their fine location. With the good management of Uncle Tom, and the superintendence of Colonel Harlan, trees were soon felled, logs hewn, and substantial houses built.

Oizelle and Fanny Manard were in their element, arranging their log cabin mansion.

Aunt Chloe and Angy looked askance at it, and didn't see how the Carringtons were going to live in such a house as that. Aunt Chloe tossed her head and said the Carrington niggers lived in frame houses, with brick chimneys, and 'fore the Lord, "Mistiss" was going in a house daubed with dirt and chimney built o' mud! What would Master say?

But Oizelle seemed so delighted over it, the very novelty seemed to amuse her so much, Aunt Chloe said:

"God knows I 's glad to see Miss 'Zelle laughing and getting rosy once more; if its doin' her that much good, I aint goin' to say another word."

The change had certainly been of great benefit to Oizelle. Though she still grieved secretly for St. Clare, she also had a secret hope that all would yet be well. While it was very mortifying for him not to be fighting for the South, she would, in her heart, try to exonerate him, laying all the blame to his Northern education. "Poor St. Clare, an exile! Better that than fighting against us," she would sigh and hope, and then proudly resolve to do her duty, and with Fanny Manard for a boon companion, they made the wilds of Texas echo with their mirth and gayety.

The log cabin was completed—two large rooms; one for Mrs. Carrington and 'Zelle, one for Mrs. Manard and Fanny, with a hall between. Colonel Harlan furnished them plank for the hall floor, and that was their reception room. These room floors were puncheon, but none ever guessed it after Uncle Tom leveled them, filled in the cracks, covered them thick with hay, then stretched elegant Brussels carpets over all.

Oizelle and Fanny vied with each other in decorating their rooms, and as they had both brought their fine paintings and their best books, with damask and lace for

draping, the walls soon looked as elegant as the floors. Angy was beginning to take heart. "But what will you do with that great mud fireplace, Moizelle?"

"We will fill it with a blazing, crackling fire in winter; a regular yew log for Christmas, if we are here so long," said 'Zelle. "But for this summer we will have Uncle Tom get us some rocks and ferns from the brook, and we will make something pretty of it. But we must hurry up with our rooms; the dining room and kitchen are about complete now, and we must help Aunt Chloe."

"Yes," said Aunt Chloe, walking in just then, looking admiringly at the room, "I never had no idea you could get fixed up so comfortable in a log house; but law sake, child, don't you know it was Master what done it all. He never knowed when to quit packing. You've got everything to make you comfortable."

"Why, yes; and Colonel Harlan has sent to Houston for a cooking stove for you; we will soon be civilized again."

"Law, child, my stove will be here to-night. I've got everything now but my dining table. I wish you would come out here; they are making me a table now, and I want you to show them how to round off the ends, and make it look like a 'stension table. I want to see a dinner in this log house and invite Miss Gordon and Miss Harlan," and Aunt Chloe chuckled to herself and seemed to be catching the spirit of her young mistress.

Mrs. Manard was a quiet, refined little lady, and leaned entirely on her handsome, strong-minded daughter. Fanny Manard was a queen among women—intellectual, cultivated, practical. She was a staunch ally of Mrs. Carrington, and managed her mother's business better than her brother could have done, for he, like his mother, was a dreamer and a book-worm. Fanny would laugh at their want of common sense, and have her own way about everything. Fanny and Mrs. Carrington prided themselves on their management, and Uncle Tom said they were the smartest women in the whole country.

Further down the brook the negroes had built their houses, and it now looked quite a village. Fanny ob-

jected that they were too far from the house, for if any of them were sick, she and Mrs. Carrington had to go to them night or day.

"Well," suggested Mrs. Carrington, "we will have a large room built for a hospital nearer the house; we will have to have a room for the loom and spinning wheels, too."

"That is the very idea," said Fanny, "I will take charge of the hospital and you the work room."

"It is very important for us to begin making cloth," said Mrs. Carrington. "We are too late to make a crop, but we can get plenty to live on, and if we get them all well clothed before winter, we will have accomplished a good work. Colonel Harlan says he can get an old lady to come and teach us how to weave and spin, so I think we had better put the women right to work at that, as we can buy cotton and wool. Tom says he can take the men on the railroad and make money cutting wood and ties."

"Providence certainly directed us to this point," said Fanny.

"Yes, and Colonel Harlan says the men can be getting rails at the same time. You know we must fence a great deal of land for cultivation. And that reminds me, Tom is building an immense cow pen. The Colonel says we may milk all the cows we can pen. It seems the prairie is full of young calves, and the cattle owners are glad to have them gentled."

"Was there ever such a country. The Lord put it here for us poor 'Refugees,'" laughed Fanny. And so things progressed at Fernbrook. Uncle Tom declared they had struck the "land of milk and honey" sure enough. Besides the cows, the bottom was full of bee trees, and the niggers were getting all the honey they wanted.

Oizelle, Mrs. Manard, and Aunt Chloe were more interested in the big dining to come off.

Pete had scoured the country, and coops full of fat turkeys, chickens, ducks, and even roasting-size pigs, were on hand, and Aunt Chloe was spreading herself. She declared she never saw the like o' eggs. Them Harlan

niggers everyone had a poultry yard apiece ; she believed they sold eggs to their own "mistiss."

And so the dining came off. The Harlans and Gordons came with children and servants, and everything was a perfect success.

Aunt Chloe's table looked like a sure enough 'stension, and the china and silver glistened just as elegantly as it did in Louisiana.

Angy told Aunt Chloe the ladies were dressed so beautiful, and everything looked so fine, she didn't think about the old log house.

"Well, I did," said Aunt Chloe. "I couldn't help thinking about them silks and laces trailing over a puncheon floor."

After dinner, as they were sipping their coffee in the hall, Colonel Harlan remarked :

"The young ladies needn't think they are going to waste their sweetness on the desert air out here, for one day this week I was at the depot and saw one of the Groves family, and I sent word down to the social center of the State of the presence of two beautiful young ladies up here. And so you may look out for company in a few days ; and I wouldn't be surprised if you are taken forcible or sociable possession of."

"Explain yourself, Colonel," exclaimed the young ladies. "We were just resigning ourselves to weaving and spinning."

"Weaving! Yes, meshes for some of Magruder's staff."

"Now really," said Fanny, "this grows interesting! Where are we to meet them?"

"Well," said the Colonel, "you know Piedmont, our famous summer resort, is not far above here ; but just below us, about twelve miles, is the social center of Texas, 'Liendo' and 'Alta Vista.'"

"What beautiful names!" exclaimed the young ladies. "Are they towns?"

"No, they are the homes of two old Texans. Colonel Groves lives at Liendo, one of the loveliest places you ever saw, near the railroad and 'Camp Groves,' which is

now military headquarters, while Liendo is headquarters for all the young people of the State.

"Alta Vista is the magnificent residence of Colonel Kirkland, a wealthy Brazos planter, who married and began building the finest house in the State just as the war commenced. It is hardly completed yet, but it is a magnificent house and commands one of the finest views in the State, from which it takes its name.

"Colonel Groves and Colonel Kirkland are connected and living near each other, and the two houses entertain nearly everybody in the State. You think it wouldn't have been very hard to have done that before the war. Well, no; but now they are constantly thronged with the military and the 'Refugees.' And I wish you young ladies no better luck than to be invited guests to Liendo or Alta Vista."

Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard were glad to hear such favorable accounts of the society of Texas, and thanked the Colonel for his kind interest in their daughters; they would be pleased to see any of his friends.

Texas was having all the gayety and enjoyment of a military regime, with the disasters and horrors of war afar off.

CHAPTER VII.

TEXAS was connected with the seats of war in the other States by a regular courier line, running from the terminus of her little railroad to Shreveport, Louisiana. The captain of that line was a young lawyer of Baton Rouge and a particular friend of the Carringtons. - Meeting Colonel Morrison on his return, Captain Buckner had learned of the location of the "Refugees," and was delighted to know that they were not very far from his headquarters. As he halted at the Texas end of his line what would be more pleasant than a gallop down to see the fair young daughters of his own State?

He had formed no very favorable opinion of Texas.

Like the negroes coming from South Louisiana, he was not prepared for the wild, rough country it was his fate now to pass over so often. He was a lively, rollicking fellow, and Oizelle screamed with delight when she saw him one morning dismounting in front of their log cabin. Her joyful welcome brought the whole household to the front, and though he had never met Mrs. Manard and Fanny, he was a particular friend of Captain Manard and Colonel Morrison; and above all, he was a Louisianian, and was now their direct means of communication with their loved ones. So the welcome could not be half warm enough.

Aunt Chloe flew to get up a big dinner, and the young ladies wanted to know why he couldn't move his headquarters down to Fern Brook. He thought the name entirely too romantic for his headquarters, but promised to keep a courier plying between the two places, and that courier should be himself.

They were all very much cheered up by Captain Buckner's visit; it gave them an opportunity to send letters back. Mrs. Carrington wrote the Doctor and George how well they were doing; wrote everything to cheer them. Oizelle wrote Mrs. Vance and dear old Judge Willard, comforting them all she could. Mrs. Manard and Fanny wrote the Captain and Colonel Morrison, insisting on the Captain's having a furlough to come and see how his mother and sister were doing.

Captain Buckner connected business with pleasure and came also to inform Mrs. Carrington that several wagon loads of sugar had arrived for her at the terminus of the railroad, and as it was consigned to his care, he came down to see what disposition was to be made of it.

"Yes," she said, "Dr. Carrington has shipped it to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy, and it is to be exchanged for hospital stores. You must get as much quinine and other medicines for it as you can; coffee, also."

"Don't you want any for your own use?"

"Yes; you may send me two barrels of sugar and a

sack of coffee. All the rest must be exchanged for the benefit of our sick soldiers."

"I wish all the men of this country were that patriotic, Mrs. Carrington."

"Why; don't you think they are, Captain?"

"I don't mean Texas is not doing her duty, Mrs. Carrington, but there is a horde of speculators from everywhere. Sometimes I wish we were shut off from Mexico."

"We get a great many necessary things from Mexico, especially our medicines."

"I am very thankful for that, but this mania for speculation is disgraceful. We now have a regular thoroughfare from the Red River to the Rio Grande. And an army of speculators in our rear can do our brave soldiers in the front more harm than if we were entirely cut off from the world. I actually believe sometimes the Yankees leave the door of Mexico open to us for our own destruction."

After the Captain had gone, Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard sat pondering his words, and talking about what he had told them of the speculators.

Fanny Manard spoke up in her usual quick, positive manner, "There is but one remedy for it all."

"What is that?"

"Make raising cotton a capital offense!"

"Then what would we have to spin and weave?"

"Oh! we'll raise enough for that."

"But," said Mrs. Carrington, "it is so hard to limit the quantity."

"Then hang the speculators," said Fanny.

All laughed at her decisive way of getting rid of them, but decided it was about the best thing to do.

"At any rate," said Mrs. Carrington, "I think it should decide us, Mrs. Manard, just to take in land enough to raise corn, peas and potatoes, and, as Fanny says, barely enough cotton to clothe the negroes. I suppose, too, we will have to have some to exchange for the necessities of life—quinine and coffee."

"If we feed and clothe ourselves, I think we should be thankful," Mrs. Manard said.

"We will not starve in this country; and, mother, I think you have clothes enough for a twenty year's siege."

"But not the right kind, my daughter, not the right kind. Now, how do I feel out here in the woods wearing my elegant wrappers? I was thinking I would have me a homespun dress made."

"Capital!" said Fanny. "Oizelle, let's have us a suit made?"

"I wouldn't be ashamed to wear it," said Oizelle, "but we will have to wait until the negroes are clothed and then take the remnants."

Mrs. Carrington pushed on in her practical, common sense way, and soon had her looms and spinning wheels in motion. Aunt Chloe had started a poultry yard, and Uncle Tom was immensely interested in hog raising; the wild, new place begun to take on an air of business.

But things were assuming a new phase for Oizelle and Fanny. Instead of living in the woods buried in oblivion they began to catch glimpses of gayety in the near surroundings.

General Magruder was at Houston, and was as noted for his social attraction as for his military dash and courage. The surrounding country was feeling his influence.

Instead of homespun dresses, the ladies were resurrecting all the old time finery they could lay hands on. Now and then some one would run the blockade and bring in a hint of the outside fashion and it would be adopted and spread like a prairie on fire.

In lieu of the latest fashion, however, they would turn and twist the old finery and make it even more becoming to individual beauty than the set fashions of a ladies book. And even General Magruder said he had met some of the handsomest ladies he ever saw in Texas.

Angy and Mrs. Manard's maid, Cora, had given the house an extra tidying up, while their young mistresses were out for a morning walk. They had just returned, laden with wild flowers, and had taken their seats in the large, cool hall, where Angy had spread elegant rugs and placed all the comfortable chairs, for it was mid-summer now and that hall was a favorite resort.

Rocking to and fro and arranging their flowers, they were attracted by the sound of horses' hoofs, and a buggy, driven at the rate of two-forty, by a young man in a gay Confederate uniform, stopped and a nervous old gentleman was assisted out and followed in by the young gentleman.

The young ladies were fresh and rosy from their morning walk, and, with flowers strewn everywhere, they rose, smiling and blushing. The old gentleman came in with a short, quick step, bowing and smiling.

"Excuse me, ladies; my friend Harlan was to have come with us, but not finding him at home, we came straight up. My name is Groves, Colonel Groves," extending his hand to 'Zelle, which she took, introducing herself and Miss Manard.

"Certainly, certainly," said the old Colonel, "I have heard of you both, only I didn't know which from which, you know. This is my nephew, young ladies, Major Groves. He is with us only on furlough, but hearing through Colonel Harlan of the grace and beauty hid out in the woods up here, why we just naturally came 'bush-whacking' in search of it! Ha, ha, ha! By gar! the woods are full of them now! Excuse me, young ladies, I am a blunt old Texan, you know, and came specially to see your mothers."

Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard, coming in, were introduced to the gentlemen, and the old Colonel proceeded to extend the hospitalities of the State to them, while the young Major made himself perfectly agreeable to the young ladies.

"No, madam, I don't agree with you," the Colonel was saying; "it is very well for you to have headquarters here on the prairie, but these negroes—all these negro men—should be in the Brazos bottom making cotton."

"Why, Colonel! I am surprised to hear you express such sentiments!" chimed in Miss Manard, "I think it is wrong to raise cotton during the war."

"Wrong to sell it during the war, miss, but not wrong to make it. Have it on hand ready for sale. It is very wrong to keep all these negroes idle. Put them to work

and let them pile up the cotton bales, ready for sale, miss, ready for sale. 'By gar,' cotton is not a bad thing to have on hand."

"Still, I wouldn't risk the negroes in the bottom," said Mrs. Carrington. "I understand it is very sickly."

"No worse than Africa, ha, ha, ha! where our Northern friends want us to colonize them, 'by gar!'"

"No; hardly as bad as Africa, but I think we will do very well here."

"You seem to be doing magnificently. You 'Refugees' don't know anything about hard times. You ought to have been here about thirty years ago, when we were all dodging the Mexicans and Indians! We lived on Mustang grapes in those days, and when we got a little corn to plant we had to put guards over it to keep the niggers from grabbling it up to eat. Oh! yes, I refueged out here in those days, only we didn't call it 'refugeeing.' No, 'by gar!' we called it retreat, and my retreat is not very far from here—Grove's Retreat, where we used to hide out from the Mexicans! We didn't have any carpets or rocking chairs in those days, either. We took it rough and tumble, I tell you. But the jolliest set of people that ever got together. I remember one time before the battle of San Jacinto a lot of people were camped out not far from here. A couple of them wanted to get married, and they sent for me. There was no possible way of getting a license, but we married them. They didn't have but one blanket between them, and a frying pan. That was an outfit in those days, so we congratulated them and left, we thought, a happy couple; but not long after they sent for us again, and wanted us to fix up a divorce, they couldn't get along any way in the world. Well, we 'split the blanket,' and gave the woman the frying pan, and 'by gar,' we hardly got home before a runner was after us again, and we had to go back and authorize them to sew the blanket together and try it again, ha, ha! Now, young ladies, you see what a free and easy country we have; pack your trunks now, and come right down to Liendo. We don't have anybody setting off in a lonesome kind of way near us. Come down; all of you come

down to see us. The young folks will be up after you, now I've found just where to locate you."

"But you must stay to dinner with us," said all the ladies.

"No, I must go home."

"But be seated; you must drink coffee with us," said Mrs. Carrington, as Angy made her appearance with a large silver tray filled with tiny coffee cups of the most delicious French coffee.

"Ah! now you show your raising. You Louisianians beat the world making coffee, and we Texans for drinking it. I have but one objection to your coffee—your cups are too small; ha, ha, ha!"

Aunt Chloe was tickled to death at the compliment and soon had a large china cup filled, handing it to the Colonel, her bandanaed head nodding and curtesying her thanks.

"Now, Aunty," said the Colonel, "I knew just such a somebody as you was hid back there; this is the finest coffee I ever drank. Now, I must be getting home, and I want you ladies all to come down and stay with us some."

"There now; them's real elegant white folks. I know they's rich," said Aunt Chloe. "Angy, you and Cora better come along and be getting up your young ladies' things. Begin starchin' and flutin'; you going to have somewhere to go now."

"Did you ever see such a jolly old man," said Mrs. Carrington.

"He reminds me of a rich old Spanish nabob," said Mrs. Manard.

"Ah! 'Zelle, wont we have a good time," said Fanny, clasping Oizellé around the waist and waltzing up and down the hall. "The young Major is charming."

"What is all this excitement about?" asked Colonel Harlan, who walked up unobserved just at that moment.

"Oh! Colonel, the Groves have been here. And it was so kind in you to say such nice things of us."

"I am fully repaid in seeing you both so happy."

"He is such a jolly old man, Colonel," said 'Zell. "And he is going to send the young people up for us."

"I knew it," said the Colonel, "he is the best man in the world, and his hospitality knows no bounds. When will you young ladies be off? I had just as well say good-bye to you. Fern Brook will have no more charms now."

"Ah! now, Colonel, we will not desert you," said Fanny, "but the young Major is splendid."

"And the beauty of it is you will meet so many young majors at Liendo, you wont know which is the most splendid," said Colonel Harlan.

"Now, trust me for deciding that," said Fanny; "but upon my word, I never was so curious to visit a place."

"I expect you will strike it at its gayest season," said the Colonel, "for I have just returned from Piedmont; they are breaking up there now and most of the young folks expect to go to Liendo. A number of Magruder's staff are flourishing up and down the railroad, and it is whispered Magruder himself will be at Liendo and Alta Vista next week."

"How propitious!" said Fanny.

"We will hold ourselves in military readiness to march at the first command," said 'Zelle.

"May victory perch upon your banner. I am sorry I was not at home this morning to come up with the old Colonel, but I suppose he had no trouble introducing himself."

The girls laughed; "No, indeed."

"He gave us to understand we were in a free and easy country," said Mrs. Manard, "and we must waive all ceremony."

"That is exactly what he meant. I will bid you young ladies good-bye, for there is no telling when I will see you again," and the Colonel took his departure, after inquiring if he could be of any service to the ladies in a business way.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANGY and Cora scarcely had time to get their fluting done when the little negroes came running to the kitchen to tell Aunt Chloe to "just look down the road at all them ladies and gentlemen coming!"

The excitement spread from the kitchen to the house, and heads popped out of the windows to see a gay cavalcade of young people on horseback, in buggies, and a big army ambulance that would have held its dozens, but seemed only to contain two or three.

"What is that that young man 's got hanging from the horn of his saddle?" asked Aunt Chloe, peering through the window.

"It looks like a hammock," Cora said. "Only two or three of them coming in."

"The rest of them knows they look so pretty perched up on their fine horses," said Aunt Chloe. But Angy had disappeared to meet them at the door and seat them, where they were not kept long waiting, as Mrs. Manard reminded the girls there must be no ceremony.

Fanny and Oizelle were both social and genial, and lost no time in giving the Major a warm welcome, when he introduced his petite, graceful cousin, Miss Groves, and was about turning to the other young lady, when a scream of recognition, ending in kissing and hugging, brought Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard on the scene to recognize the daughter of an old friend of Vicksburg—Miss Lulu Compton, who was a schoolmate of Fanny's and an old friend of Oizelle's.

"Why, I had no idea you were all in Texas!" Mrs. Manard said.

"Oh, yes; we came several months ago, and so many of your old friends on the other side of the Brazos!"—And Miss Compton rattled on, and could have monopolized the conversation had not all felt it too selfish.

Miss Groves said, "I do like to give these pleasant surprises, and I know you all enjoy home talk; but I

must remind you you are in Texas, and father has sent me to bring these young ladies home with me, and we have no time to tarry."

"Is it possible those young ladies have ridden twelve miles on horseback?" asked Mrs. Carrington.

"Why, yes," said Miss Groves, "we left home this morning; we frequently ride twenty miles hunting."

"Hunting!" exclaimed the ladies.

"Yes; running rabbits and netting birds. It is rather early for birds, but we brought our net along in case we should flush a covey. Come out, Mrs. Carrington, you and Mrs. Manard, let me introduce you to my young friends; and you, young ladies, get your hats and your baggage."

"You have not been to dinner?" Mrs. Carrington said inquiringly.

"Oh! yes we have. We brought our dinner with us, and lunched sumptuously in the woods before we got here." And Miss Groves led the way, Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard following, to be introduced to as gay, pretty a set of girls and handsome young officers as ever were collected together.

"This is better than fighting Yankees!" Mrs. Manard laughed and said to the young men.

"Oh! no, madam; we are eager for the fray, but this is fine pastime in the interim," answered one handsome young adjutant.

Major Groves and Miss Compton soon escorted Oizelle and Fanny out, introducing them, and were about assisting them into the ambulance, when Miss Groves asked,

"Where are your trunks?"

"Our trunks!"

"Yes, of course. You don't expect to come back any more—for a long while?"

"We didn't think you expected us to move down!" laughed Fanny.

"Oh! well, if you conclude to stay, we can send for your trunks."

So Angy deposited a valise and her basket and climbed up to a seat by the driver.

Bidding Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard good-bye, Miss Groves said: "Father and mother told me to tell you ladies to leave this ranch in charge of the negroes and you both come down to Liendo; it will be too lonely for you here. Have the girls' trunks ready, we will send for them in a few days."

With the horseback riders in the van, the buggies, and then the ambulance, they started off in a double quick.

"It will not take them long to get home at that rate," said Mrs. Carrington.

"I am real glad the girls don't have to sit here and mope away their lives," said Mrs. Manard. "And we will accept their invitation when we get too lonely."

Liendo was situated on a small, undulating prairie, rolling, sloping to the brink of Pond Creek, which stood in pools of water covered with water lilies. One of the largest of these pools was a few hundred feet from the front gate, and upon its bank stood a great, cumbersome wind mill that had refused to do duty from its first erection, and had been christened by its owner "Groves' Folly." It now served as a lover's retreat, and the Colonel said "as it had become the seat of others' folly besides his own, he would grumble no more about it, especially since he had moulded the lead pipe into bullets for the army."

Our party drove up in front of Liendo just as the sun was setting, and was welcomed by a score of voices from the wind mill, as well as by couples promenading the walk inside the yard. Midway this walk from the gate to the house, was a round brick work, a kind of mound, that now afforded seats for several, but for the failure of the wind mill, would have been a gushing fountain, sprinkling the grass and evergreens of the front yard. They didn't seem to miss the refreshing water, for they grew luxuriantly—wild peach, pine, and magnolia. Anything the mistress' fancy chose to transplant from forest or nursery grew in that yard. To the right was the flower garden, blossoming with the finest roses, perfumed by the sweetest shrubs.

But Oizelle and Fanny could only take all this in at a

glance, for seated on a wide, hospitable Southern gallery were more people to be introduced—old people and young people, children and nurses.

"It is a veritable resort," whispered Fanny, "and yet it hasn't the appearance of a hotel."

No, it was simply a comfortable, two-story house, with halls and galleries and an ell extending back, and the wonder grew where so many people could be stored away. There was a head that managed all that. The servants at Liendo were neat and orderly; everything moved on smoothly, no jostling or jarring. Oh! the luxurious ease and comfort of Liendo.

The Colonel was glad to see them. "Wife, here are our new young ladies."

"Yes; I have met them," said a motherly voice. "Go right up to your room, girls. Daughter, be ready for supper."

"Yes, hurry up and come right down, my daughter," called the Colonel. "It has been dreadfully lonesome without you all day."

A word of this daughter: Nellie Groves laid no claim to beauty, but very small, graceful, an exquisite dresser, she had that charm of manner that fascinated and controlled the whole wide circle of Liendo.

A model daughter. She was her father's right bower, whether holding her own with him at a game of whist, mixing his juleps, or soothing him in his most nervous moods.

She was indispensable to him as well as to the guests of Liendo, for she was the sunshine, the music of the place.

A born coquette, the Major, her teasing cousin, said he believed she was engaged to every soldier of her acquaintance enlisted in the war.

She would defend herself by saying, "If they never returned they would die with a loving remembrance of her; if they did, then she could better say no." So, from the general to the poorest soldier getting his canteen filled at her mother's dairy, she was the embodiment of sweet-

ness—a regular little humming bird, flitting here and there, charming everyone.

Dear little Nell. Born with a silver spoon in her mouth, like many, many others, she lived to drain the bitter dregs of the cup!

Oizelle and Fanny were taken captive by the whole family; charmed with the place, the people, fascinated by Nellie, it is useless to say their trunks were sent for and weeks passed before Fern Brook knew them again.

Liendo was indeed the social center of the State. Not only refugees from other States, but from Galveston, Brazoria, the coast country; indeed, representative people from all parts of the State could be met there. Fanny and Oizelle had the rare fortune of meeting old Sam Houston himself. For in spite of his political views, he was idolized and lionized by old Texans.

Tall and commanding, he still had the appearance of an Indian chief, wearing numerous rings on his fingers. But his respect for and gallantry to the ladies charmed Oizelle and she felt a peculiar interest in hearing him talk of the war, because his views were so much like St. Clare's.

Poor St. Clare! If she only knew where he was! She was confident he was neutral, and was waiting, impatiently waiting, somewhere, for this cruel war to be over.

In spite of her trouble, the pure, dry atmosphere of Texas, and the outdoor exercise she was taking brought roses to her cheeks, and every day was adding to her beauty.

The slow, overland mail route always brought good news from Dr. Carrington and George. Although they were in one battle after another in Virginia, they seemed to bear charmed lives.

Oizelle was naturally hopeful and buoyant, and she entered heart and soul into all the novel amusements Liendo and Alta Vista afforded.

Troops were being concentrated at Camp Groves, for what purpose none but the military heads knew.

Cavalry, artillery, and infantry were all camped there,

which afforded fine horses and plenty of beaux for the young ladies, and as many of the soldiers' families joined them in camp, it was doubly attractive, and couriers plied between the two places, bearing billet deaux and flowers.

General Magruder was expected to review the troops and hold consultation with General Kirby Smith, whose family was then at Alta Vista.

Alta Vista was built on the broad, open prairie. The Houston prairie extending from there to the gulf—an expanse of range that made one, not accustomed to a prairie country, feel a kind of awe, like being on the ocean, out of sight of land, but so exhilarating! The south breeze came with a sweep from the gulf, laden with the perfume of wild flowers—prairie blossoms, that seemed to catch their tints from the gorgeous sunsets of the west.

Alta Vista had been built with special adaptability to climate and scenery. It stood a land mark for miles and miles around, and from its observatory you could almost look into the Gulf of Mexico.

The whole of the first story could be thrown into one immense hall by means of folding doors. This, of course, afforded the young people a rare place for entertainments; tableaux, charades, theatricals of most any description; and from among the soldiers could always be found fine musicians—performers on the violin, banjo, guitar—and with the young ladies to accompany them with the piano, a most excellent band could be improvised almost any evening.

Now, General Magruder was coming, so noted for his taste in histrionic productions, they had a rare chance to exhibit their talent and entertain their noted guest.

What a furor of excitement! Oizelle and Fanny must needs run home to add to their wardrobe, ransack for old finery, look up certain books to find certain parts. Oh! what a gala time!

CHAPTER IX.

AS Mrs. Groves was just starting to the penitentiary to draw her quota of cloth, Oizelle and Fanny took seats with her in the ambulance and were soon at Fern Brook.

"You will stop and get acquainted with our mothers?" inquired Oizelle of Mrs. Groves.

"I will scarcely have time to get out."

"It has been so selfish in us to leave them alone so long," said Fanny, a little conscience stricken; "but you are all so very demoralizing at Liendo; I don't think I ever enjoyed a visit so much."

"And your mothers are glad to have you enjoy yourselves, I know; but it seems they are not alone—I see some gentlemen on the steps."

"It is Captain Buckner," said 'Zelle.

"And my brother!" shouted Fanny, springing from the ambulance.

In the midst of the joy and confusion, Mrs. Groves was introduced to the family. All assembled 'round the ambulance to insist upon her getting out, but bent on business, she was not to be detained, and promising Mrs. Carington to put in her application for cloth, she drove on.

"Why didn't you send for us?" asked Fanny of her brother. "And how long have you been here?"

"Oh, we got here several days ago, and were so delighted to find you both gone," said Captain Manard, "we have been taking our comfort and ease, and Aunt Chloe has almost foundered us on good living."

"Quite a contrast to our camp life, I assure you," said Captain Buckner.

"If you wanted comfort and ease, you should have gone on down to Liendo," Oizelle said.

"Yes," said Fanny, "if it is true the word 'Dixie' was originally given to an imaginary Southern home of luxurious ease and elegant laziness, I think Liendo must be the original Dixie."

"They study to do nothing there more pleasantly than any place I ever visited, and yet the daily programme is energetic and exciting," said 'Zelle. "You are roused before breakfast with coffee; after breakfast horses stand harnessed and saddled, and you go where you please! Somebody has always to be at the depot and postoffice at train time to catch all the news and rumors of news. The old Colonel says he pays a dollar for an extra giving an account of a battle, or a half dollar for a rumor of a battle. In the afternoons you lounge and read, and in the evenings you hold regular receptions. Music, whist and cribbage fill the hours, and the wide hall stands ready for a dance any time the young folks say so. I do wish you both had come down," exclaimed Fanny.

"What! perfect strangers?" asked the young men.

"Yes; just so you are gentlemen. Everybody is welcome there, and taken right in to the bosom of the family."

"And you meet everybody," said 'Zelle. "Why, what do you think, mother, we met General Sam Houston himself!"

"Indeed! Then you did realize you were in Texas."

"Yes; down there you hear as much of San Jacinto as you do of Manassas. It seems to be headquarters for old Texans.

"And now we are just in the midst of a programme for entertaining General Magruder. Oh! brother, you and Captain Buckner must go down and help us out in the play."

"Captain Buckner and I will be far away from here, and I doubt your interesting General Magruder in any parlor play at the present."

"It is not a parlor play. I tell you, sir, we have a most magnificent hall at Alta Vista, and we are going to have a regular play, and lovely tableaux."

"You will have to wait until after Christmas for an audience, for I tell you there is unusual stir among the military just now. I've got to hasten back to my command. I think it is time something was being done in this department."

"I did hope you would spend Christmas with us," sighed his mother.

Oizelle followed her mother out of the room, inquiring if Captain Buckner brought any letters or news from home.

Captain Manard's eyes followed her with admiring gaze. "By Jove! what a beauty your friend is, Fanny. I have often heard of Miss Carrington, but I was not prepared to see anything half so beautiful."

"Take care, my susceptible brother, I forewarn you; admire at a distance."

"Who is the lucky fellow? Vernon Terrill? He is the one I've heard rave so about her beauty; and by the way, I have a message from him. I saw him not long ago."

"Oh! no," said Captain Buckner. "It is no secret at home; she has been affianced to St. Clare Willard for years."

"Why, that's off now, surely; he is a renegade!"

"No; an exile, she says; and you had better touch that subject very delicately, or better still, not at all."

"'Faint heart never won fair lady.' I am glad I haven't long to stay; I am not impervious to such beauty."

"Hush! you bad boy. You can't guess who is at Liendo."

"No; who?"

"Your old flame—Lulu Compton."

"Let's go down there. Can't you take me to-morrow?"

"Maybe so. You would enjoy a week there."

"Can't we spare the time, Buck?"

"I've got to be on duty; no doubt you can."

Oizelle was closeted with her mother, reading letters from Mrs. Vance, telling how infirm her father had grown, how they were annoyed by marauding parties of the enemy and how she wished she was in Texas.

Not a word of St. Clare! Oizelle sighed, but brightened up, and returned smiling, to join in the general chatter.

Captain Manard soon riveted her entire attention, delivering messages from her talented, eloquent friend Colonel Terrill. Vernon was associated with so many of

her brighter, happier moments, she listened, and grew enthusiastic in her admiration for their mutual friend, never realizing she was making false impressions, or that Captain Manard would ever have the opportunity of repeating the same to the Colonel himself.

The next morning, as Captain Buckner was preparing to take his departure, and all were out to see him off, three splendid young cavalymen dashed up, saying they had deserted for a few hours, to say good-bye to the young ladies, and to bear a message from Miss Groves, saying they needn't hurry about the entertainment at Alta Vista, the military were all moving, and soon Camp Groves would be deserted.

"Why, what's up?" inquired Captain Manard.

"We don't know; Magruder is arranging his chess men, I suppose."

"I hope he will play a winning game! It is growing very monotonous in the trans-Mississippi department."

"Well, get down and come in," said Fanny, "this may be your last social visit! Oh! this horrible war, to break in upon our elegant entertainment!"

"We have but a few moments to stay, and Miss Groves suggested, we will bring you back with us, in order to swell the old maid's department at Liendo, as you will have to protect yourselves against ennui and loneliness."

Fanny and her brother determined to drive immediately to Liendo, hear the news, and see the soldiers off.

Oizelle declined going, much to their disappointment.

Captain Manard didn't find Liendo so gay; everybody was blue and disconsolate; Mrs. Groves had not returned and the old Colonel was in an unusual state of nervousness. The Captain did find Miss Compton, however, and Lovers' Retreat offered unusual advantages, but somehow after being dazzled with the beauty of Oizelle, Lulu was tame and uninteresting. Trying all her arts in vain, after supper, in the parlor, she thought of how exquisitely the Captain performed on the violin, and suggested music.

If Colonel Groves loved any music, it was the fiddle, and as he was just about retiring, with his usual "Good

night, ladies and gentlemen ; sit up and enjoy yourselves as late as you please, but, 'as I'm lame, I'll go first,' as Santa Anna said."

All exclaimed, "Wait! Colonel, wait! Captain Manard is going to give us some music on the fiddle!"

That was a great inducement, so the Colonel took his seat. Captain Manard excelled himself playing snatches from this opera and that; when the old Colonel startled the audience with:

"Well, 'by gar,' how long does it take you to tune that instrument, anyhow?"

"Why, father, father!" exclaimed his daughter, springing to his side, "Captain Manard is playing lovely!"

"He is? Well, I reckon he is playing the 'violin.' 'By gar,' tell him to play me a tune on the fiddle, and let me go to bed!"

The Captain was a little confused at first, but quickly catching the humorous side of it, he struck off on "Rack back Davy," "Fisher's Hornpipe," and the "Devil's Dream." The Colonel grew jolly, and declared he would set up all night to listen to such music.

The young folks formed a set, and dancing was kept up till the "wee sma' hours." "Come, boys," said one of the soldiers, "This may be the 'Eve before Waterloo' for some of us!"

"At any rate we have spent a jolly evening." And good-byes were said, more cheerful for the music and the dancing.

The next morning Colonel Groves would not hear to Captain Manard leaving. "I would give a hundred dollars to have you spend Christmas with me! Anybody can play the fiddle like that, I want them to live with me."

The Captain thanked him, but told him he was then running the risk of being court martialed, and he must get back to his command without further delay.

They did stay till after dinner, however, and Mrs. Groves returned in the meantime, saying she spent the night at Fern Brook, and was delighted with Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Manard.

"I tried to make them promise to spend Christmas with us, but they think they can not leave home, at least Mrs. Carrington can not. What a splendid woman she is; I am perfectly charmed with her."

"Do come down Christmas, my dear."

Fanny left, promising to come if she could possibly persuade them to leave home.

Captain Manard hastened his adieus, leaving his mother and sister in tears, and feeling a little piqued that Miss Carrington was so distressingly lovely, and yet he had failed to make his usual impression. For months he carried her beautiful face like a photograph in his memory.

Fern Brook was unusually dull after his departure, and Mrs. Manard declared her intention of spending Christmas at Liendo. Mrs. Carrington could not be prevailed on to go, although all tried to convince her a change would do her good, but she knew too well a change of place could not affect the secret anxiety and longing she had for her husband and son. Every moment must be filled with duty, active duty in providing for all those now under her special supervision. Her untiring energy distressed Uncle Tom, and he took his young mistress aside to beg her to insist on Mistiss going on a little visit.

"Don't you see how pale your ma' is, honey? It jist breaks my heart to see how she works and thinks for us all, when I see how troubled she is 'bout Master and Mas' George."

But nothing could move Mrs. Carrington from her post of duty. She insisted that Mrs. Manard, Fanny and Oizelle should go to Liendo.

Mrs. Gordon and her children were to come spend Christmas week with her. Uncle Tom was to erect a Christmas tree, which was to be filled with war-made toys and ornaments that had taxed the ingenuity of the ladies for a month past.

Thus persuaded, and being convinced their room was necessary for the enjoyment of the children, Mrs. Carrington was left to entertain her guests. Angy, who didn't seem well, insisted on staying to help entertain

the children. So Cora accompanied the ladies to Liendo, where they found a house full of women and children.

The old Colonel was unusually gloomy, and all combined could not succeed in raising his spirits. Cribbage and cards failed to keep him still a moment. He took on a double allowance of toddies and juleps, and raged like a caged lion at the whole Yankee nation.

"What have we done that we are subjected to this unnatural war? Simply doing our duty, as God intended us to do. Civilizing and christianizing a barbarous race. Rescuing them from the jungles of Africa, from cannibalism itself. And yet we are 'slave drivers,' and should be swept from the face of the earth.

"'By gar!' I can't stand to be left alone here with you ladies; if my old legs will hold me up, I will be off to the front!"

And so he blustered and drooped by turns through that dreadful Christmas week.

CHAPTER X.

NEW YEAR'S day dawned with the booming of cannon, and shouts went up for the battle of Galveston and the taking of the Harriet Lane.

No pen could describe the excitement that prevailed.

Every train brought accounts of the cavalry raid upon the gun boats. The dash, the success, was too good to be true, and Liendo, filled with Galveston refugees, went into hysterics of excitement. The old Colonel dispensed with his toddies, and said, "'By gar!' he felt young enough to enlist."

The girls redoubled their energies and resolved to give Magruder and the cavalry such a welcome as never was heard of.

Telegrams of congratulation were sent, parties ran down to Houston to gather every particular of the fight. And when at last the soldiers began to return, and even

prisoners were brought to Camp Groves, Liendo felt the laurels of a victory were being laid at her feet.

Once more the halls were filled with gay uniforms, and the clink of spurs was the sweetest music that could be heard.

One morning the old Colonel had been over to the barracks to get a peep at the prisoners. Returning, he found the parlor filled with an excited throng, looking over numerous illustrated papers captured on board the Harriet Lane.

"What's the excitement?" he asked, resting on his stick at the parlor door.

"Oh, Colonel!" they all exclaimed, "See! Here are a lot of Harpers!"

"Harpers! 'By gar' who dared bring them under my roof? Burn them up! I tell you, burn them up!" the old man shouted, rapping his cane on the floor.

"Why, Colonel, they are trophies of war!"

"Trophies of the devil! I tell you, sir, the devil will light his fires with the Harpers to burn the Beecher family!"

"Father, father!" exclaimed his daughter.

"Take them out of my sight! I tell you they will give me the hydrophobia! Take them out of my house!" And the old man went off foaming.

Mrs. Groves came to the parlor.

"Daughter, send those papers away. Your father means just what he says. You young people can laugh over the absurdity, but your father's nerves are all unstrung by them."

Oizelle was standing off alone, so absorbed in the pictures of one, she had not understood the order to send them away, and when requested to give it up, said:

"Oh! do please, let me keep this copy, I want to show it to mother! Do look! Mrs. Manard, my favorite boat, the New Uncle Sam, landing the first Federal troops at Memphis, Tennessee! I do hope my little clerk is not on board!"

"Here is an opera glass I captured, Miss Carrington," said a young cavalry man. "Maybe you can recognize

him through it. I picked it up on deck of the Harriet Lane; you can keep it and the paper as a memento of the occasion."

"But, I am afraid to look!" and Oizelle made her escape up stairs, with her trophies, where I am afraid she had a good homesick cry over the New Uncle Sam.

The victory at Sabine followed, and the Magruder season was at its height. Alta Vista and Liendo vied with each other in entertaining distinguished guests. Entertainment succeeded entertainment, and all went merry as a marriage bell until the fall of Vicksburg. Port Hudson and Baton Rouge followed, and our refugees were enveloped in a cloud of gloom. Disaster was indeed coming home. Mrs. Manard and Fanny remained at Liendo, striving to drown sombre forebodings in the wildest dissipation. Oizelle could hold out no longer. Going quietly home, she found her mother nerved for the worst.

Angy was having slow fevers and a dreadful cough; she seemed homesick and dispirited, and Oizelle turned her whole attention to her, trying to nurse her back to health.

The hospital had been built, but they had had very little use for it. It was remarkable how very healthy they had all been. A few chills, but nothing serious. All had been well clothed and well fed, and the dry atmosphere had insured the rest. But now Angy, the favorite of all the servants, seemed in a decline.

Oizelle made her a bed in her own room, and nursed and grieved over her—but Angy was a French negro and she pined for the orange trees of Louisiana, the music of the French tongue, and above all her religion, for she was a devout Roman Catholic. And when Oizelle realized there was no hope for her, her lungs were fatally diseased, and her dear faithful Angy must go, she determined she should have all the spiritual consolation she could, so telegraphed for a priest and had him minister the last sacred rights to as devout a soul as ever passed from earth to heaven.

A beautiful mott of timber stood near the house, and

Oizelle and Uncle Tom had it trimmed up, and under the vines and shade, where wild violets bloomed, and mistletoe clung to the trees, Angy was laid, and a choir of birds constantly chanted a requiem over her grave.

CHAPTER XI.

TO Louisianians the downfall of Vicksburg was the knell of all hope. With the river opened to the enemy it was as Colonel Morrison had predicted, "like the levee breaking in an overflow, the whole country flooded with blue coats!" and the Refugees waited in breathless suspense to hear from home.

Mrs. Manard lived in the northern part of the State, and her home was not so much exposed as Mrs. Carrington's, but from this on her son and Colonel Morrison were in deadly conflict with the enemy in Southern Louisiana, and every moment was a prayer for the lives of the loved ones. Homes, property, were as nought when weighed in the balance.

Nothing had been heard from Dr. Carrington and George, and weeks of the most terrible suspense ensued before Captain Buckner again made his appearance, and then no letters from Virginia added to the deepening gloom, and the Captain could scarcely force himself to tell of the heart rending distress and destruction in Louisiana.

Hastily written notes from Captain Manard from the Atchafalaya had prepared them somewhat for the destruction of property, but for individual persecution they were not prepared, and for the rest of their lives shuddered at the fate of dear old Judge Willard as a horrible nightmare. He had remained on his plantation with Mrs. Vance and her daughter, growing more infirm every day, depending entirely upon Adolph, Rose, and Aunt Dinah for directing, caring for everything.

Aunt Dinah was true to the last, but it seems Adolph

fell a victim to the flattery and bribery of the enemy, maybe threats as well, for he alone knew of the secret places, where in desperation the family had concealed their valuables.

Viola Vance, the eldest daughter, had been an invalid for over a year, and Aunt Dinah had been her constant nurse. Rose had been raised by Mrs. Vance and was indispensable as a maid. She and Adolph were married and occupied a room in the basement of the house, but faithful, black old Dinah slept on a cot by the side of the invalid, where a touch or a moan would wake her. Mrs. Vance, with her sick child and aged parent, felt herself leaning solely on these family servants for protection, and trusted Adolph implicitly. So imagine her consternation when she found him closeted with and led away by the enemy to their gun boats.

Aunt Dinah was more practical than her mistress, and immediately jumped to her own conclusions. Leaving her sick charge, she told Mrs. Vance she must remove her diamonds and silver to some other place of concealment. She had scarcely accomplished the change when Adolph was seen piloting the enemy to the different places, and all were delving like miners in the gold fields of California.

As the family watched from their windows, trembling for the consequences when they failed to find the treasure, their attention was attracted by a dense smoke, and then flames shooting up, told of the destruction of the Carrington home! Mrs. Vance wept aloud and thanked God the owners were safe, far away in Texas. Ah! better they had been there and offered a sacrifice on the funeral pyre of their own home.

The roar, the crash of the burning timber, seemed to add fury to the prowling marauders, and being baffled in their search, entered the house and swore vengeance against the grayheaded old Rebel, and putting a rope 'round his neck, choked him till he turned black in the face, telling his daughter they would desist when she produced her jewels.

Mrs. Vance flew to get everything, but Aunt Dinah showed fight, and stood by her old master.

In the meanwhile, one of the soldiers was bearing out the invalid daughter, and depositing her safely on the ground, declared his intention of sticking a torch to the building. Judge Willard was prostrated by the cruel treatment, but Aunt Dinah got him out of the house, and with the assistance of some of the other negroes saved some of the bedding and chairs, and seeing the fine piano, implored them to save that. Some of the soldiers, emulated by her courage and devotion, brought it out for her, but relenting afterwards, split the top off and used it for a horse trough.

Adolph and Rose disappeared in the midst of the excitement, and Aunt Dinah took the family into her own cabin and did everything to restore them, but Viola expired that night and Mrs. Vance became a raving lunatic.

It was some time before friends in Baton Rouge learned of the distress of the family and conveyed Mrs. Vance to the asylum.

The old Judge remained with his one grandchild in the care of Aunt Dinah, and lived long enough to learn that the instigator of the robbery was a young man he had met North, taken a fancy to, and had educated at Yale, giving him every advantage of an own son. He had a brilliant intellect and was well versed in the sophistry of his own section, and no doubt began his career of ingratitude by influencing St. Clare against his own home.

Oizelle was frenzied with grief at this horrible account of the Willards, and Mrs. Carrington found it necessary to suppress the continued accounts of outrages perpetrated, and to try and prepare her daughter, as she had herself, to be ready to meet the very worst.

The conscientious, pure-minded women of the South could not understand why they should be so persecuted, but proud and brave, they would rather have been exterminated than submit to so unjust a foe.

Mrs. Carrington flattered herself if she thought she was prepared for the worst. The worst, so far as physical sacrifices were concerned, she was prepared for. Loss of

Compare this with the account of the same scene in Aunt's story.

property, home, she could give up all that cheerfully, but when news of the battles around Richmond reached her, and she knew her husband's regiment was exposed to the deadly hail of the enemy's bullets, why did she grow nervous and shake and neglect every duty. And when at last the fatal letter came from General Hunt, telling how gallantly he fought and died, how was she prepared for the worst? Like any other frail, devoted woman—crushed to the earth, all hope, all desire for life gone.

And yet she had to live, bear up, and look about her! She saw her daughter, her noble daughter, striving to smile and encourage her, and then the two clasped hands and struggled on together.

General Hunt's letter not only told of the death and burial of Dr. Carrington, but of the disappearance of George, for some little time, though it was known he was alive within the Union lines, maybe a prisoner, full particulars could not be learned.

Vernon Terrill had fought nobly in the Virginia army, been promoted on the field of battle for gallantry, and now Lee's surrender was inevitable, he and General Hunt determined to make their way home to Mississippi, thence to the trans-Mississippi department, fully believing General Smith would make a stand in Texas.

Crossing the Mississippi river they fell in with Colonel Morrison and Captain Manard, and made their way to Texas.

Besides having the hope that Jeff Davis would make his escape, and we would plant ourselves in the Lone Star and defy them still, Vernon could not travel fast enough when he thought of the prospect of seeing Miss Carrington again, and after all her troubles he longed to be near her, to console and be a friend in time of need.

As they journeyed together, Captain Manard had encouraged him, by telling him of Oizelle's admiration for him, of her exquisite beauty and perfect grace, improving every day she had been in Texas.

At the time of the surrender, Texas was crowned with her most glorious season, Springtime. Emerald crowned! Flowers scattered in such profusion, nature seemed ready

to strew the grave of the fallen Confederacy with garlands and summon her myriad of feathered warblers to chant the funeral dirge.

But the poetical symbol of nature was unheeded, and man, inhuman man, crushed all love for his fellowman, and Texas witnessed a regular stampede that would have put to blush her maddest herd of bovine.

General Hunt was furious at the demoralization, and declared his intention of going straight on to Mexico and joining Maximilian. No persuasion of Mrs. Carrington or Colonel Morrison could alter his intention.

Many other chivalrous soldiers of the cis-Mississippi had arrived with the same desperate determination, but were influenced by cooler heads, fascinated by charming ladies of Liendo and Alta Vista, and so abandoned their Quixotic desire, rested, and looked about for some visible means of support.

Vernon Terrill was completely subdued in beholding the calm resignation of Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle, and determined he would never leave them until George at least could be restored to them.

Mrs. Manard and Fanny were happy in the return of Captain Manard and Colonel Morrison, and were making every preparation to return home as soon as Dr. Gordon arrived. And while they waited for him they went to Liendo to spend a week, as the old Colonel had sent several messages to Captain Manard to come and cheer him up with his fiddle.

Vernon Terrill remained, offering to assist Mrs. Carrington in any way that lay in his power, but she could think of nothing she could do but remain where she was. Her house and fences were all destroyed in Louisiana, and if they had not been, she had no desire to go back. She could make a living she thought where she was. She had accumulated large supplies of meat and poultry, and then had a fine crop of breadstuffs growing, she thought she could continue to control the negroes, and she must look to their interest as well as her own.

Colonel Harlan was a kind neighbor and offered her every inducement to stay. Dr. Gordon arrived and found

his family so well fixed he declared his intention of remaining the rest of the year anyway. He also assured Mrs. Carrington that George was alive, and he thought he would put in his appearance now very soon.

CHAPTER XII.

OIZELLE'S manner to Vernon Terrill expressed admiration and the truest friendship. Nothing more. Though he dared not presume anything farther, he was anxious to talk with her about St. Clare and know if she knew of his whereabouts; but the subject was one of such delicacy, he scarcely knew how to broach it.

In the meantime, the party returned from Liendo, full of life and eager to return home. As soon as Dr. Gordon's intention of remaining was learned, all preparations for leaving were hastened to a conclusion, and Fanny startled the household by announcing her intention of marrying Colonel Morrison. He had been her guardian since her father died, and she said it seemed she needed a guardian now more than she ever did, although, so far as property was concerned, she had very little to guard, Cora being the only one of all the negroes who expected to return with them. At any rate, the marriage caused a ripple of excitement.

They had to pass through the county seat on their way home. Mrs. Manard wanted them to enter a church there and have the ceremony performed, but Fanny insisted on being married in the dear old log house, taking Mrs. Carrington's and 'Zelle's blessing with her. It was as she wished, and Aunt Chloe surpassed herself preparing the wedding luncheon; and her "little gal" Liza, who had now grown into a nice looking lady's maid, and had taken Angy's place in the house, grieved at parting with Cora, but ran to the big gate to throw old slippers after the wedded couple.

Vernon and Oizelle had also followed after them, wav-

ing handkerchiefs as long as they were in sight; then seating themselves on a log that lay by the roadside, he summoned courage to ask her when she had last heard of St. Clare, and was surprised to learn, never a word since the fatal day she had parted with him.

Then if by look or tone she had given him the least encouragement, he might have been tempted to suppress the little good news he had heard of St. Clare and urged his own suit; but as it was, he was glad to be able to tell her something that would brighten her up and bid her hope, though that hope condemned him to despair.

"Strange, he never attempted to communicate with you," said Vernon.

"No, no; his father would never hear a word from him. And when we came to Texas he knew nothing of our address.—And there is no telling what he has endured all these years!"

"The only time I have ever heard of him, he was doing good service for the Confederacy."

"What!" exclaimed 'Zelle, "Have you heard of him? Oh! where? Mr. Terrill, tell me where he is!"

"That I cannot do; but this much I know: After leaving you he went to Cuba, and remained until he was convinced we were in for a war of no small proportions. Then he went to Europe, traveled, studied, but finally becoming restless, he fell in with Commodore Maury, who was in London, negotiating for the Confederacy, and staying with a sympathizing English nobleman.

"One day, in conversation with the nobleman, Commodore Maury became indignant at England's delay in recognizing the South. His friend assured him there was but one thing in the way of recognition.

"What is that?" demanded Mr. Maury.

"Convince the English people the South is not fighting for slavery, and you will be recognized."

"Fighting for slavery!" exclaimed Mr. Maury. "Why the United States does not pretend that is the question of the war! The South is fighting for State's rights—the right to secede. The States formed the Union; they

surely have the right to dissolve it. The Federals are fighting to preserve the Union. So they themselves say.' *And*
 " 'Make the English people understand that, and they *did -*
 will demand the recognition of the South.' *Clare's*

" 'How am I to reach the ear of the people?' asked Commodore Maury. The Englishman replied, 'Issue pamphlets, asserting and proving these facts, and place them in the hands of the rectors of the churches to be distributed to their congregations.'

" Straightway Commodore Maury set to work on those pamphlets. St. Clare was an efficient collaborer, and just as they were issued some friend of the United States hastened with the news to Washington City, and President Lincoln, being convinced there was but one way to counteract the effect, issued his emancipation proclamation."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Oizelle.

"That is the secret history of Mr. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation."

"But whatever became of St. Clare?"

"He was in despair after that, and falling short of means sailed for Cuba, hoping to be able to communicate with New Orleans and get some money he had deposited there in bank—his individual inheritance from his mother's estate—but I suppose it was confiscated; he was never able to return to Europe."

To know he had been trying to place the South in her true light was great consolation to Oizelle, and she brightened with the hope that now it could not be long before she would hear something definite from St. Clare.

Returning to the house, Vernon enjoyed the delight it afforded Oizelle to tell her mother all about it, but he saw too plainly her perfect devotion to St. Clare and resolved to return to Mississippi, keeping his own love a secret.

A few days after, Sam, Dr. Carrington's body servant, returned, riding his master's horse and bringing many little articles belonging to her husband back to Mrs. Carrington. Poor Sam looked as crestfallen as if the whole South had been upon his shoulders! And as curiosity

had taken him clear down the river to see the ruins of their old home, he shed tears when he talked about it.

"Never mind, Sam," Mrs. Carrington said, "don't let 's talk about it, but tell me of your Mas' George."

A broad grin spread over Sam's face as he fumbled for a letter in his pocket.

"I spec he 's writ you all about it"—

"All about it—about what?" exclaimed Mrs. Carrington.

"Why, didn't you know he was married?"

"Married! The foolish boy," said 'Zelle.

But Mrs. Carrington was devouring the contents of the letter, and sure enough George was married. Wounded and a prisoner, he had been cared for by a family within the Union lines in full sympathy with the South; he had fallen in love with the pretty seventeen year old daughter, and after partially recovering and making his escape back to Lee's army, learning of his father's death, he was so shocked and overcome his fever returned, and making his way back to his new-found friends, they were so kind and sympathetic, it all ended in his marrying the pretty Minnie Earl, and now he implored his mother to send him some money as quick as she could, he was so anxious to get to her and Oizelle.

Vernon Terrill immediately volunteered to take a letter and some money back to him, for mail regulations, like every other form of government in the South then and for many years after, were very uncertain. So Mr. Terrill, leaving Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle under Doctor and Mrs. Gordon's protection, took his leave of Fern Brook.

Soldiers and citizens were now in one mad state of confusion. The negroes were the most quiet of the whole population and seemed so undisturbed, listened to the announcement of their freedom with such indifference, their owners supposed they couldn't possibly understand it, so explained it to them like children. They staid and worked on, as a matter of course, and would have continued to do so, making the best tenantry any country

ever had, landlord and tenant understanding each other, loving one another, but for suffrage and wily politicians.

After many weeks elapsed, George and his child-wife arrived—children in age only. Both had had such heart-rending experience during the war, they looked careworn and aged.

George was a settled man; all that lithesome gayety was gone, and Uncle Tom shook his head and groaned when he saw him, but said:

“Never mind, little Master, cheer up, cheer up; it’s mighty bad, God knows, but I think we will be able to make a living. Me and Mistiss is been doing mighty well here.”

Gradually they became accustomed to George and fond of his pretty, devoted little wife—practical and ready, she was great consolation and help to Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle.

Now Mrs. Carrington had someone with her, Nellie Groves came and demanded Oizelle of her, saying:

“Dear Mrs. Carrington, it will be real charity to let her go. Liendo is now like some ‘banquet hall deserted.’”

To a stranger, Liendo would have seemed all right—the servants were all in their places, with the same polite manner; everything was orderly and quiet. Yes, Liendo was quiet, and that was the matter. Colonel Groves could scarcely endure it; a crowd, an excitement, had become necessary for him. Now they would not be able to keep open house and entertain their friends so extravagantly; his wife suggested he would make a good landlord; he would have to go to some city and keep a hotel. The poor old Colonel gnashed his teeth at the very idea.

But excitement soon came in a manner not looked for. One afternoon all were sitting on the gallery when they heard rumbling of wagons, clatter of horses’ hoofs, and before one could realize it, soldiers in Federal uniform were dismounting and stretching their tents almost in front of the gate.

Poor old Colonel Groves; he shook like an aspen, and Oizelle almost fainted. But Mrs. Groves bore up so bravely, and Nellie chirped about so encouragingly, all

determined to smile at misfortune and submit to anything.

It was soon known it was General Custer's command. Oizelle scarcely recognized an old acquaintance in Federal uniform, tipping his cap and presenting "Mrs. Custer's compliments to the ladies of the house, and would they be so kind as to send her a rocking chair."

The finest parlor furniture at Liendo had been stored in the garret during the war and substituted by more substantial home-made chairs, but Nellie had a servant mount the stairs and produce the finest rocking chair they ever owned and sent it to her ladyship.

Oizelle sat gazing, staring at that Federal soldier, and not until he had taken the chair and was turning to leave did she spring after him, crying, "Adolph, Adolph!"

Adolph turned like a culprit, and hanging his head, said:

"Miss 'Zelle, I didn't think you'd know me."

But Oizelle paid no attention to his looks, or anything he was saying, she was so eager to hear when he left Louisiana, when he was in New Orleans and if he had seen or heard anything of St. Clare Willard.

But Adolph could tell her nothing, and seemed in haste to be getting back to the Federal tent.

"Poor Adolph," said 'Zelle, going back to her seat on the gallery and giving the family an account of him. "Adolph was a good negro, and just like one of Judge Willard's own family! And now what is he? A servant for General Custer instead of Judge Willard!"

The next morning Oizelle was in such a nervous condition she found it impossible to stay longer in sight of the Federal encampment.

The young Major was back, attired in quiet citizen dress, and his manner was almost as subdued as his dress. He and his little cousin took 'Zelle home, though the old Colonel assured her it was "plum cowardly," but "by Gar, he wished he could close up and hide out too. But we are in for it, my daughter! we are in for it! and God help this country! I do believe we had better all go to South America!"

CHAPTER XIII.

OIZELLE'S return and report of the arrival of the Federal troops, and her encounter with Adolph, was the cause of about the first act of freedom on the part of any of the servants.

'Liza repeated at night all the conversations she had listened to in the house during the day. Pete, her brother, was now quite a "fancy young colored man" himself, and he and 'Liza were tickled at the idea of Adolph being a soldier and waiting on Mrs. General Custer.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe didn't approve of the way Adolph had deserted his old master and "gone over to the Yankees," and now gave their son and daughter plenty of good advice about what they thought was their duty.

Sam found the life of a civilian very tame after his exciting experience in the Virginia campaign, and he and Pete determined to visit the Federal camp and interview Adolph. Of course it would never do to let Uncle Tom know anything about it if they did, they would have to foot it, as it was; they both attended to the horses, and nothing could be easier after Uncle Tom was asleep to mount themselves and satisfy their curiosity. True the horses would have to be ridden pretty rapidly between midnight and day, but they must see Adolph. And they did.

Adolph was perfectly rejoiced to meet old friends of his own color once more, and Sam giving him minute directions to Fern Brook, he promised to return the visit very soon. As his military duty consisted chiefly in scouring the country for eggs and chickens and supplying the larder of his distinguished officials, he was soon familiar with the nearest bridle path leading from Liendo to Fern Brook and a constant visitor to Mrs. Carrington's quarter, particular to Uncle Tom's cabin, for 'Liza was quite an attractive "colored young lady" now.

The Carringtons felt sorry for Adolph, spoke kindly to him and thought nothing of his visits to their quarter, but in Adolph's wake followed other soldiers, visitors of whiter complexion than Adolph, visitors to Uncle Tom's cabin.

Soon a perceptible change could be seen in 'Liza and Pete, and in fact a general stir of interest was manifest about the whole quarter. On certain evenings a general sweeping of yards, scouring floors and chairs, beds dressed in their Sunday spreads, all betokened "company," and company on week days at the quarter was something unusual. The Carringtons said nothing, however, trusting to Uncle Tom to direct things and keep up with the work.

'Liza had to be indulged at the house in her suddenly acquired young lady ways, and the Carringtons were more amused than otherwise when they heard Sam and Pete addressing each other as Mr. Jones and Mr. Beck. 'Liza assumed the greatest dignity as Miss Beck.

"Where did they get their names, mother?" asked George.

"Tom always called himself Tom Beck," said Mrs. Carrington. "I think his father or some of his ancestors belonged to the Becks of Kentucky."

"It will be right amusing now to trace their names. I would have thought Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe would have honored us by taking the name of Carrington."

"No; don't you hear them calling Adolph 'Mr. St. Clare;' you would have thought he would have been 'Mr. Willard,' but no, he came from Mrs. Willard's family estate, and is a St. Clare negro. I don't know where Mr. Jones got his name."

"It is right amusing to watch them assume their new dignity."

"Poor things! They always were great imitators, and will soon surpass their mistresses in dressing and entertaining; but what will become of them? Providing for and taking care of themselves is the question that troubles me."

"Well, thanks to the Federal government, that is removed from our consciences."

"Very true, but I can't help feeling an interest in them. My attachment to the negro is very strong."

"We will try and keep them together and do the best we can for them; our mutual interest demands that."

"Yes, my dear son, you have about as unfair a start as the poor negro—your education cut off, no profession."

"And no muscle. I think the negro has the advantage, mother."

"Yes, that far he has, but with our superior intelligence we must continue to manage him."

"I have no fear of not being able to do that," said George; "I was always a favorite with the negroes. Justice and kindness is all that is necessary."

"I have had no trouble with them all during the war; we have raised everything abundantly, and I think it the very best policy to continue to be self-sustaining."

And so those good, honest people talked and planned for the future, accepting the consequences of the war as inevitable and trying to rise superior to their circumstances. The trouble was they were too superior to grapple with the dirty tools with which they were soon to come in contact. Innocent and unsuspecting, they sat overlooking first one encroachment and then another.

Oizelle began to grow impatient at 'Liza's neglect of duty and finally spoke to Aunt Chloe about it. The old lady seemed a good deal troubled and wiped the corner of her eyes with her apron as she said:

"Laws, honey, I don't like their goin's on no more than you do. I tell them they are all a set of young fools, letting them white men come around putting them up to all sorts of devilment. Just the other day Adolph and one of those white soldiers tried to make Sam and Pete take Mas' George's horses and go with them back to their camps, telling them the horses were more theirs than they were Mas' George's, 'cause hadn't they been working all their lives for the money what bought them."

"Why, Aunt Chloe! Is it possible they talk that way?"

"They talk with less sense than that, honey; but Tom told them to clear out with such talk, and told Pete to let him catch him mounting one of Mas' George's horses if he dared! Looks like I will have to wear 'Liza out yet. I done told Tom I wish Mistiss would keep that gal to the house all the time. I don't like the way things is going on; no, I don't honey; no more does Tom."

But things continued to go on just the same way until one morning 'Liza came in grinning, her white teeth shining, and presenting a note to 'Zelle, took refuge behind her apron. The note was addressed to Miss Carington, written by General Custer's adjutant, asking permission for "Mr. Adolph St. Clare" to address "Miss Eliza Beck."

Oizelle read it with a good deal of indignation, but suppressed her wrath, and handing the note back to 'Liza, said very quietly:

"I am not the proper person, 'Liza. That note should have been written to your father and mother. But you are not thinking of being in love with Adolph? He has a wife; don't you know Rose—Judge Willard's Rose—was his wife."

"Yes; but we're all free now!"

"Why, you simple thing! But go along, and tell Aunt Chloe all about that note, for if you are not more industrious, I can't afford to keep you. You have been neglecting your duties all this week. I can not put up with it."

Oizelle went into the other room to tell her mother about the note, but George entered at the same time, looking rather grave.

"Uncle Tom thinks we had better put locks and keys to our stable doors."

"I wonder what is the matter!"

"The old man seems considerably disturbed."

Oizelle then told of the note, and all that Aunt Chloe had been telling her.

"Is it possible they are trying to make those poor ignorant negroes take such a view as that!"

"I will talk to them, and explain it to them," said

George. "And I believe I would be justified in not letting that kind of men come on our premises."

"And tell Tom about that note; I would hate to see 'Liza entrapped. I will talk to Chloe about it," said Mrs. Carrington.

But it was too late. Before Uncle Tom or Aunt Chloe could be communicated with, 'Liza had gone with Adolph and General Custer was on his march to San Antonio.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe were greatly troubled about their "little gal;" but like all troubles in those days, they had to be borne patiently.

The sun shone as brightly, the birds sang as sweetly, crops matured and were gathered as usual.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTMAS came, and Dr. Gordon and George Carrington had fully determined to remain another year and plant cotton.

Old Colonel Groves came up and tried to persuade them not to undertake it. "I don't believe you will be able to control the labor," the old man said.

"Why, Colonel, see how well I managed them all during the war," Mrs. Carrington said.

"I know, madam; but circumstances are very different. When the negroes realize they are free to go here and there and everywhere, they will become shiftless and lazy, and I tell you, it wont do to risk money on them. Besides, they are going to be tampered with by low whites, and the respectable part of Southern people, their old owners, will have less influence over them than anyone else."

But the Carringtons thought they had such an extra lot of negroes, and Uncle Tom was so faithful and had so much common sense, they knew he could manage them.

"I wish you all success," the old Colonel said. "But I do wish you had taken my advice during the war, Mr.

Carrington, and now had several hundred bales on hand for sale. Cotton is at a big price now, and you could have sold out and gone with me to Brazil."

"To Brazil? Is it possible you are going to leave the country?"

"Yes, madam, just as soon as I can sell out."

"I think that is wrong, Colonel. The substantial citizens should remain and control the country."

"Self-preservation! Mrs. Carrington, I must look out for self." And so the old Colonel left them to their own judgment.

The holidays passed as usual with the negroes—plenty of Christmas and a jolly good time.

Colonel Harlan, like all land owners, determined to go to Houston or some town and live upon the rent of his land.

Dr. Gordon and George leased his houses and lands, and the Carringtons moved into Farmingdale, giving Uncle Tom possession of their log house.

All the Carrington, Manard, and Gordon negroes entered into a contract with the Doctor and George for the ensuing year, and all were hopeful of making plenty of money on a big cotton crop.

Mrs. Carrington turned her hogs over to Uncle Tom and went shares with him in pork.

Pete was still putting on a few young gentleman airs, but no one blamed or noticed him. Sam and some others roved off and went back to Louisiana, but the majority stayed and seemed well contented.

George Carrington was proud to get his family into the large, comfortable house at Farmingdale, though all regretted to see the Harlan's move away.

Colonel Harlan had always been a prominent politician, representing his district in the State Legislature continuously, but now "Othello woke to find his occupation gone," and, like Colonel Groves, was not willing to risk anything on free labor, and so leased his land for what he could get, and went to Houston to live.

Uncle Tom had always liked Fern Brook, and he and Aunt Chloe took possession of Mistiss' room with real de-

light, and Aunt Chloe agreed to do the Carrington's washing for the old carpets and numerous other things. They imagined themselves quite tony and longed for their little gal to complete their happiness. But Pete was in his glory, and all parties were beginning to adjust themselves to the new situation.

George and his wife were recognized as the head of the Carrington household, and his pretty, busy little wife seemed to know how to do everything. Mrs. Carrington and 'Zelle would lend a helping hand, and all were hopeful and prayed for contentment.

The Gordons were comfortable, and the Doctor, a handsome, popular man, was getting some practice. He and George were partners in planting, but he was a silent partner. George and Uncle Tom managed the farm.

The spring was divine, and there was no trouble getting every acre planted. But the summer came—hot, lazy weather. Not much to do, it's true, but odds and ends were left undone, and freedom begun to pervade the atmosphere.

To add to the hilarity, numerous visitors began to arrive from the different portions of Louisiana—numerous aunts, uncles and cousins of the colored persuasion, some regular tramps, but mid-summer brought the most distinguished arrivals.

A hired hack from the nearest depot deposited at Uncle Tom's door one sultry afternoon two of the most elegantly attired ladies.

Mr. Pete Beck was overcome with the distinction. But Aunt Chloe was a little confused when Mrs. St. Clare and Mrs. Smith were announced, and she recognized in Mrs. St. Clare not her little gal, but Rose, all the way from New Orleans in search of her husband, Mr. Adolph St. Clare. Uncle Tom was bowed with humiliation, but Uncle Tom was a natural diplomat, and as he and Aunt Chloe put their heads together and decided it would never do for her to follow Adolph any farther, Fern Brook was made so attractive, Aunt Chloe's chicken pies and nice fresh butter held them spellbound, and they soon became

oblivious to Adolph and all his shortcomings, for was not Mr. Pete Beck a much younger and handsomer man?

The ladies accompanied Aunt Chloe over to Farmingdale to get the washing and satisfy their curiosity with a look at the Carringtons in their new role of doing without servants. And it almost reconciled Rose to 'Liza's elopement with Adolph to see the aristocratic Miss Oizelle Carrington doing her own chores and otherwise helping herself.

Mrs. Carrington spoke to them in her usual manner and made a few kindly inquiries, but the ladies were so dressed they seemed ill at ease, and Oizelle followed Aunt Chloe out to deliver the soiled clothes.

"Who is that black woman you call Mrs. Smith, Aunt Chloe?" Oizelle asked.

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"Laws, honey, don't you recollect that little black nigger; use' to live in New Orleans along with the St. Clares? And they give her 'way to some Northern house-keeper they had—named Topsy, honey, Topsy. Don't you 'member? I bound your ma do."

Oizelle hurried back to the room to take another look, and found her mother in animated conversation with "Mrs. Smith," having penetrated her disguise and recognized the veritable Topsy.

"Why didn't you stay North?" asked 'Zelle.

"Oh! Miss Feely, she so hard to please! and then a nigger they an't nothing but a nigger up North, nohow! And still they 'specs you to do jist like white folks," said Topsy, jerking off her little hat and veil and looking sure enough nothing but a nigger.

But Rose was outraged! and said: "'Mrs. Smith,' I am surprised at you!" and left the room with all her assumed dignity of the white lady.

Mrs. Carrington and Minnie couldn't help laughing at the farce, but Oizelle bit her lip and stamped her foot with vexation to see that brazen, impudent piece, posing as Mrs. St. Clare.

Aunt Chloe came in and apologized for having brought them in the house.

"But, mistiss, what am I to do?" asked the poor old woman, her eyes full of tears.

"Never mind, Chloe," Mrs. Carrington said, "We understand! You have to do the best you can! But, Chloe, I wouldn't cook for and feed them for nothing."

"God knows what's going to become of us," the old woman moaned as she went out of the door.

To Rose and Topsy the summer at Fern Brook was gorgeous. Every cabin on the plantation was filled with visitors and their nightly orgies uproarious. Strange to say, their frolics, instead of the banjo and fiddle and dancing, now consisted of "meetin's," regular religious festivals. They would shout and scream and tear each other's clothes off in their wild excitement; all night long they would keep it up.

Of mornings George Carrington would ride out in the field to see if the hands were at work—hands that were eating his rations and receiving monthly wages! Old Uncle Tom would be at his post. "Where are the boys?" George would ask. Uncle Tom would shake his head.

"Don't know, Mas' George, I can't do much with them; they are up all night, and ain't much fit for work early in the morning."

Then George would ride around to the different houses. Some would be just getting up, some gone—not at home, some would say.

"Boss, I thought I would go work on the railroad and make a little extra money. Them last rations you issued done give out, and I's bleached to feed my family!"

"But your time is not your own," George would say, "you are under contract to work for me! Don't you see the cotton is wasting? If you are out of provisions, come up to the house, I will let you have all you want, and charge (!) it to you."

"All right, boss! All right!" It was no longer "Yes, sir, master! Yes, sir!" it was "All right, boss!" And so George's smoke house was usually besieged with belligerents about 12 o'clock m. Boxes of bacon, sacks of flour, molasses, sugar and coffee were dealt out with no

meagre hand, all "charged." And as Lee surrendered to the "world in arms," so now Dr. Gordon and George seemed to be feeding the State. And in proportion to increased supplies of provision, work seemed to decrease, and the nightly orgies became louder and louder.

Rose was the mirror of fashion to the whole colored population, and maintained her dignity and supremacy on all occasions, and Mr. Pete Beck was her most devout follower. But Topsy threw off her accomplishments acquired North like a "garment loosely worn," and she reveled in the freedom of the plantation; tramped from one cabin to another; caused family jars here and there; picked cotton a little; did as she pleased generally, and her voice could be heard above all the din and roar at the "meetin," shouting and exhorting the younger converts. Mrs. Smith was a regular leader, a pillar of the church, a "Mother in Israel."

One of the most pleasant recollections of slavery was their religion, and old Uncle George, a venerable old colored man belonging to the Gordons, conducted religious services all during the war among the colored people, and the whites, the "Refugees" particularly, enjoyed going to hear him preach; and their prayers and singing were beautiful, especially their singing. Many an evening the Carringtons had sat on their steps at Fern Brook and listened to the old fashion hymns float up on the evening air, and it was soothing, peaceful.

But now their religious exercises were a regular fetish, blood-curdling to listen to, and you began to feel like you were in the heart of Africa.

Uncle George passed into the "Rev. Mr. Alvis," and all things changed. Now you never heard any of the old hymns, but the most outlandish jargon of music and words took their place.

The Gordons and Carringtons would get together and talk over the change and wonder what they must do.

"I never imagined anything like it," Dr. Gordon would say.

"No; but we've got too much invested to give it up. I'll tell you what I've been thinking about," George said.

"I don't believe we will ever be able to get the cotton picked; let's send for Mr. Granger and sell out to him."

Mr. Granger was a Galveston merchant, who had been advancing supplies, and now came up to take in the situation. And such a cotton crop was never seen—hundreds of acres of cotton white as the driven snow.

Mr. Granger was surprised to find George so discouraged; told him there was enough cotton there to pay every debt in the State. He hurried back to Galveston and sent up a steam gin; Uncle Tom took charge of it. Mr. Granger receipted Dr. Gordon's and George's accounts and took the cotton crop.

Dr. Gordon and George congratulated each other on being so well out of it, and stood aside and looked on at the destruction of as fine a crop of cotton as ever grew.

Negroes, encouraged by cotton pickings—that is, big dinners, barbecued meats and all the attendant et ceteras, whisky and coffee thrown in—would assemble and pick out hundreds of pounds, pile it up mountain high in the fields, then leave it for cattle to feed on and exposed to the rain. "Free niggers" had to go the nearest way to any place when they started, and time was too precious to stop to put up a fence—much as he could do to let it down; besides rails were the most convenient kind of firewood, and so the fences disappeared, and Mr. Granger must look after his own cotton.

Oh! it was wicked. The destruction of that cotton crop was sinful.

CHAPTER XV.

TIMES began to assume a serious aspect for the Carringtons and Gordons. It was clearly demonstrated they could not risk money on free labor. Then what could they do? Dr. Gordon had a profession, but George Carrington had nothing. His living must come from the soil.

Thanks to Uncle Tom, his team was still in pretty good condition, and he was compelled to try to make another crop. He would take his mother's advice this time, rent less land, plant less cotton and raise corn and potatoes.

Dr. Gordon was getting a pretty good practice; he would stay where he was, plant corn, etc.

In the meantime the merchant was not discouraged at the destruction of the cotton crop. The negroes were now so much in debt to him he saw a fine opening to establish a peon system, equaled only in Mexico. And seeing what fine land it was, took a lease on it and proceeded to stock it.

George thought of course he would be allowed to keep the houses and applied to Mr. Granger for the position of agent for the place. But, to his astonishment, was informed he had made all his arrangements.

Uncle Tom, or rather now we will have to say Mr. Beck, was to be his agent. He thought it would have better effect upon the negroes, and Mr. Carrington would please vacate the houses the first of January.

Mrs. Carrington thought the best thing they could do would be to move back to Fern Brook. It was a separate estate from Farmingdale, and she thought by writing immediately to Colonel Harlan they would be able to control it. Fortunately it was so, and though it was very mortifying to have to move back into the log house after the negroes had occupied it, still it was the best thing they could do. Money was very scarce with them now, and their team, their farming implements and hogs about covered their earthly possessions, excepting their silver and a few jewels.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe took it harder than anyone else, and could scarcely be reconciled to the change, but George Carrington convinced them it would be better for them to be there than some other negroes, and so with a barrel of lime and Uncle Tom's assistance the log house was made ready once more for the Carringtons.

Oizelle had become so anxious about St. Clare she was indifferent to any change, and hopeless expectancy had wrought a great change in her, though it had not quite

prepared her for a letter she now received from Baton Rouge, written by Eva St. Clare Vance, now the only survivor of that unfortunate family.

She wrote of her grandfather's death on the plantation. She had remained with him over a year in Aunt Dinah's cabin. After his death she had gone to friends in Baton Rouge. Her mother had died a hopeless lunatic in the asylum—but all of this was old trouble; the object of her letter was to tell her of a late trouble. She had received a letter from a friend in New Orleans telling her of her uncle St. Clare's death. He had spent most of the time during the war in Europe, but getting out of money, returned to Cuba. Finding everything had been confiscated in new Orleans, he went to Central America, to British Honduras, where he engaged in railroad construction; at the close of the war returned to New Orleans, sick with some fever incident to the tropics, was unconscious when he arrived, and died in the city hospital.

Poor Oizelle! Her cup was full! But was not certainly better than suspense. Hadn't her heart told her long ago St. Clare was dead?

The greatest panacea for trouble is work. For the first time in their lives the Carringtons had to work. Delicate hands had to be blistered and hardened to domestic drudgery.

Oizelle was too conscientious to skirk her part, and give way to selfish repining, and like her mother, rose to bear her burthen to the bitter end.

George secured a few hands and determined to work with them and do the best he could.

Farmingdale was fitted up as negro headquarters. A steam gin and mill, and in place of the old fashioned smoke house where home-made meat was stored, a country store loomed up, filled with *bacon, tobacco, whisky, snuff* and *calico*.

Mr. Pete Beck fell behind the counter and the store was where the "colored ladies and gentlemen" most did congregate.

THE NEW SOUTH WAS BEGINNING TO STIR!

Mr. and Mrs. Beck were at the head of quite an estab-

lishment before they realized it; and though dear old Aunt Chloe shrunk from the mixed company she had to keep, white and black, drinking and carousing at the store, still her visitors increased in proportion to the size of her house, and Uncle Tom stood, after many secret conversations with Mas' George, like a pilot at the helm. But there were breakers ahead before which even Mr. Beck had to go down.

Another beautiful spring witnessed the putting in of another immense crop at Farmingdale.

No advance until the seed was in the ground was stimulus enough to make every darkey, man, woman and child, work like slavery times until their stand assured a big account at the store.

Then could be seen colored girls that used to belong to Mrs. so and so, that used to be neat looking and modest, all dressed out in nickle calico, flowered and spangled, ruffled and puffed, with a snuff box in her hand and a "mop" in her mouth, going over to see if them "white women" wanted a "colored" lady to do anything.

As a matter of course there were a great many things the "white women" hadn't learned to do yet, and the "colored lady" was indispensable, especially as, if you didn't have the money, any old silk dress or ribbon and lace would do. As a consequence many a valuable dress went for a little scrubbing and washing, half done, and with the conviction if you opened your mouth you could do it yourself, and if you gave that "colored lady" any impudence, why, the provost had his office at the store, and your report and fine was only a question of a few minutes.

Mrs. Gordon was an energetic, spirited woman, who went to work with a vim to help her husband make a living. Her children were now getting old enough for school; her oldest boy, Richard, had long since gone out of kilts, his long curls cut off, and was now quite a manly boy.

Besides her domestic work, Mrs. Gordon had undertaken to teach her own children, and as a matter of neces-

sity had to occasionally hire one of those "ladies" to give her a lift out of the dirt.

Mrs. Gordon was strictly conscientious and considered it her duty to pay for value received and no more. And so upon one occasion when she paid for the work according to the way it was done, in a twinkling she found herself saluted by a Federal soldier and ordered before the provost.

Nothing abashed, and thinking she had justice on her side, she was about starting when her husband drove up. She explained it to him and they thought it would be easily adjusted. But how little they knew.

A most mortifying trial, a heavy fine, and the independent Mrs. Gordon had learned a lesson. Do your own work or submit to its being done any way. You mustn't think of the value of a thing; you must learn to be more politic. Ah! that word policy—politic! What a dose it was to a truthful, honest, Southern woman.

Stores and provosts sprung up all over the country.

The Groves had vacated Liendo and gone to Galveston, waiting an opportunity to sell and go to Brazil.

The Kirklands were still at Alta Vista.

George Carrington was working industriously trying to make a living, though his very soul was tried with lazy, impudent negroes.

In the midst of all their troubles, a baby daughter came to smile and coo and win their hearts in spite of the hard paths they now had to tread. George was almost broken down with manual labor and his wife's sickness had made it harder upon his mother and sister. All this he felt as only a sensitive man can feel it, but it was so important to make a crop and save it, he would overwork himself and use every policy with the hands. Finally, in the busiest season, he hired a strange negro, who from the first seemed impudent and negligent. Mrs. Carrington advised her son to get rid of him, but the work was so important George thought he could control himself and get a week's work anyway, but before the week was ended an altercation occurred in the field and he knocked the negro down with his hoe. George immediately went to the

house and told his mother what he had done, and while they were talking Uncle Tom slipped in the back way to tell them what an excitement it was creating at the store, and to advise George to get out of the way. The negro was pretty badly hurt, and as there would be nothing but negro evidence in the case, it would go very hard with him.

But no; he said it would be impossible for him to leave his wife with a young baby, his mother and sister delicate, and no one to help them. No, he would not leave.

Uncle Tom begged and his mother implored him to go.

No; he would testify to just what the negro had aggravated him to do, and he was not afraid.

While they argued and reasoned the officer appeared and took him before the provost.

Oh! those poor frantic women. They knew nothing but money would ever unlock his prison door, and where were they to get it?

Dr. Gordon heard of George Carrington's arrest and flew to his assistance. Having had the experience he did in his wife's case, he shuddered to think of George's position.

He was present at the trial and gave him all the moral support he could, but nothing but the payment of a heavy fine could keep him out of prison, and that, no friend of George's had, so he was marched to jail in the midst of the jeers of a drunken *black* and *white* mob.

CHAPTER XVI.

DR. GORDON cursed the negroes, the officials, and the government! What else could he do? Poor fellow, he had better not have done that.

Mrs. Gordon went to sympathize with the Carringtons, and while there her little son came shrieking with the most heart-rending news.

Three Federal soldiers had come to see his father and delivered a note from their colonel demanding Dr. Gordon to sign a written apology for his language after George Carrington's trial.

"Yes, sign it on your bended knees," the soldier said, "or be shot."

And Dr. Gordon folded his arms over his breast and said:

"I kneel to none but God! Shoot!"

And they riddled him with bullets. Oh! those horrible days of reconstruction! Would they were the wild ravings of a distorted imagination. But widows and orphans still live, *struggling in the lower strata of life*, to testify to the reality of those horrible days.

Yes; Dr. Gordon was shot dead, and his widow and orphans left to struggle on alone.

Then what had the Carringtons to hope for? No law, no justice; and while the pale young mother pressed her baby to her breast and moaned and wailed, Oizelle roused herself to action. She knew there was no time to be lost; why wait on a trial? Her brother must be free and away. She consulted no one, but waiting for night, concealed her most costly diamond in her glove, and wrapping herself in a dark mantle, stole over to Farmingdale.

It was a dark night and through the open windows she could see the dusky inmates reveling in all the luxury of their predecessors.

They had just dispatched a sumptuous supper, cooked and served by Aunt Chloe. Mrs. Rose and Pete were tete-a-tete on the front steps, while Topsy held high carnival with a dozen or more colored followers.

Slipping around to the kitchen window, she saw several half-grown girls washing dishes. Aunt Chloe and Uncle Tom were in close conversation in one end of the room. Stepping to the kitchen door, Oizelle disguised her voice and called:

"Mr. Beck."

Thinking someone wanted him at the store, Uncle Tom started up, "I'll be bound, that young scamp's off with Rose instead of being at that store."

"Yes," Aunt Chloe said, "he can't turn for her; she's going to be his ruin yet!"

Uncle Tom got well out into the dark before Oizelle spoke.

"Uncle Tom!"

"My God! Missie, is it you?"

"Yes, come back of the old smoke house; I want to speak to you."

Uncle Tom followed her.

"You know it is useless for George to stand another trial?"

"Yes, m'am!"

"You can use this diamond to let him out of jail! Do you understand?"

"Lord! yes, honey! Trust Uncle Tom for that!"

"You can take father's horse to a certain point, tie him out—you understand?"

"Yes, m'am!"

"I will have everything ready. Can you go to night?"

"Yes, m'am."

"Come on then; I will be at the stable."

Oizelle slipped back. She had already packed her brother's clothes in his saddle bags, and concealed them in the stable. Her father's horse that Sam had brought back from Virginia was a thoroughbred and had been petted and cared for by all the family.

Mrs. Carrington was occupying the room with her daughter-in-law, helping to take care of the baby, and it was not unusual for Oizelle to remain alone in the other room, so her absence was not thought of. Uncle Tom took Aunt Chloe into his confidence, and followed as soon as he could make his escape unobserved. He found Oizelle in the stable and encouraged her in the hope of being able to effect George's escape and promised to report to her as soon as he accomplished it.

Oizelle saw him well off, and then stole back to her room, and to bed—though not to sleep—for thoughts of poor Mrs. Gordon, widowed, alone, with those children, and not knowing how soon her brother might suffer the same fate, kept her awake all night.

Early next morning she rose and prepared the family breakfast. In fact kept busy all day, and her mother understood—she was working off mental agony.

All had learned to suffer in silence and work diligently.

Night came, and with it Uncle Tom, who assured Missie "that jailer's eyes liked to a' popped out o' his head when he saw that diamond sparkle, and Mas' George just walked square out and mounted that horse! I made him take all my last month's wages—I wish I had a' had more, but he can get to Louisiana and maybe sell some of the land. I promised him I would do all I could for you all, and he said: 'Take care of yourselves and his baby.'"

But Uncle Tom and 'Zelle were both crying. She shook the black, honest hand, and went into the house to tell her mother and Minnie what she had done.

Life passes with us all, a day at a time, and so it passed with our Refugees.

Mrs. Carrington and Mrs. Gordon managed as only women can, to make a living.

With Uncle Tom's and Aunt Chloe's help they got hands to save their little crops, and with now and then pawning a piece of silver or a jewel they kept soul and body together and dragged out from day to day a miserable existence, filled with mental torture for the future.

The negroes had built a church within a few hundred yards of the Carringtons, and with the store on one side of them and the church on the other, they were now situated exactly on the negro thoroughfare, and to sensitive, refined natures, it was perfect torture to listen night after night to the shouting and screaming of these *semi-barbarians*. For now all restraint was removed, they seemed to be falling back into their original condition, for the negroes were like the whites—the most intelligent of them seemed to flock to the cities.

Poverty and ignorance remained in the country, making a fine field for merchants, and subsequently for politicians.

Crop after crop continued to be planted; the hope of big credit assured putting in seed abundantly. Tramp

labor could be secured on a pinch, and cotton picking season had become a season of country resort for the town negro and wagon loads of them could be secured to pick the cotton. A whole magnificent crop could be planted for a little whisky, tobacco and bacon, calico and snuff, at two or three hundred per cent in the pocket of the merchant. *Idleness and extravagance were capital for the merchant, as ignorance became for the politician.*

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe were nominally at the head of the Farmingdale establishment, but Pete and Rose were to all intents and purposes Mr. and Mrs. Beck, and they were the head of the establishment.

In the eyes of his son, Uncle Tom was an old foggy—too much a white man's nigger. And poor Aunt Chloe, though still devoted to her white people, she now had to steal a chance to do anything for them; to be caught at it and stigmatized as white folks' nigger was sufficient to draw the wrath of Rose and all her followers upon her devoted head. And so the old lady sat and wept at the degeneracy of her children.

In trying to keep 'Liza out of trouble, she had prepared a pit into which Pete had fallen headlong. Rose seemed to want nothing better than the life she led at Farmingdale.

Aunt Chloe told Mrs. Carrington in confidence that it was "most disgraceful and outrageous the way those negroes did carry on. But they had done got Pete plum from under her control, and he and a set of low down white men were about to run her crazy with their gambling and drinking.

"It look like Tom don't care for nothing since Mas' George done gone. Says we are all going to the devil anyhow, and don't much matter how soon. I never thought to see the day I'd say it, but I'm glad 'Liza aint here; I'd rather never set eyes on her again than have her in this mess."

"And yet you don't know what kind of a mess she may be in even now," said Mrs. Carrington.

"That's so, Mistiss, but I don't want to see it."

"Have you never heard from her since she left?"

"Yes, m'am, Tom heard they left San Antonio and went back to New Orleans; I don't know anything about them. God knows I never 'spected to see my children doing this way."

As the old woman went off, the Carringtons remarked how badly she looked. 'Zelle said, "I never saw Aunt Chloe look dirty before in my life. Poor old woman; freedom has brought her her first trouble."

Cotton picking season brought swarms of strange negroes to Farmingdale, and this summer, to the surprise of all, brought Adolph and 'Liza!

You would now suppose quite a "comedy of errors" would be enacted, by Pete and Adolph and Rose and 'Liza mistaking each other's husband and wife! Nothing of the kind occurred; all were delighted to see each other and dwelt in unison and harmony for a time.

Adolph and 'Liza grew tired of camp life, and instead of following General Custer on to fight the noble red man, they drew the color line and reasoned it was as well for the red man to roam the boundless prairie, free and unmolested, as it was for the black man, and so they retraced their steps, and stopping in Galveston Adolph had found a lucrative position as waiter in a restaurant, and 'Liza, when well enough or felt so inclined, had a place as chambermaid in one of the hotels.

They had been well fed and enjoyed superior advantages of *dress and style*.

'Liza's latest made walking dresses, parasol and wraps were the envy of Rose, and were the first cause of the "green-eyed monster" uncoiling his slimy length in the bosom of that devoted family.

Adolph was killing in every particular of dress—his walking cane, and even his eye glasses to ogle the ladies as they passed, made him excruciating in effect, and Rose could but see there was no comparison to be made between him and Pete. Pete was younger, it was true, but he would have to live long before he acquired the style of Mr. St. Clare.

Mrs. Smith took in the situation at a glance, and while she assured Rose "it was a sin and a shame for such an ele-

gant city gentleman as Mr. St. Clare to have anything to do with such a black country nigger as 'Liza,' she soothed Mr. Beck's wounded vanity by telling him she wouldn't give one of his little fingers for the whole of that stuck up Adolph! "Wasn't for his clothes, what would he be anyhow? Old enough for Liza's daddy."

And with this smart black 'oman to pacify them, she soon had the whole circle topsy-turvy.

Now, the Carringtons, instead of being roused from slumber by nightly religious orgies, could hear screams and curses as if some one's very life was in danger.

Aunt Chloe was too mortified to go near her respectable white friends, but Topsy was so elated she flew here and there and everywhere—going frequently to Fern Brook offering her services to help clean up, and as it was necessary to keep her in good humor, she would have to be indulged in occasional gossip. However, after one night of unusual excitement it was learned a regular "Kilkenny cat fight" had been indulged in, and cries of fire alarmed the whole neighborhood. After the smoke had cleared away it was learned the only damage done was the burning of Liza's trunk of fine clothes, and again under excitement of fire, Adolph and Rose had made good their escape.

CHAPTER XVII.

TIME passed, and with it martial law. Once more civil government was restored. Restored on a black and white basis! Yes, black and white!

What God had put asunder the Federal government determined to join together! Caucasian blood, labeled pure and superior by the Creator, was to be forced on political equality with a coarse African race, incapable of self-government!

And yet "Uncle Sam" pointed his bony index finger at his brother Anglo-Saxon and said: "Be still, while I

fasten this handcuff of negro suffrage upon you! Be still, while I fasten Cuffy so tight around your necks, you will sink in a political maelstrom!" And you Anglo Saxons of Europe, of America, sit still and see it done!

"Might is right!" Oh, yes, "All men are free and equal!" Fling wide your ports "Uncle Sam!" Let the United States be the dumping ground of all nations! Come anarchy! Come isms! Mix your mongrel race and defy God in purity of breed!

Suppose Harriet Beecher Stowe delineated truly and faithfully the "cruelties of slavery." Suppose the means were sometimes harsh, and horrible in isolated and exceptionable cases, did not the end justify the means?

Does not nature use earthquakes and upheavals of the most destructive kind to accomplish her geological formation? Do you think of grumbling at the forces of nature in a thunder storm?

Then why have the Anglo-Saxons of the South to be snarled at as slave drivers?

God works in mysterious ways, and the *African race* is not to be *evolved* from *barbarism in a day*! Special means have to work that evolution.

Does Europe think she can stop the Arabs from seizing those black savages and forcing them into the light of civilization while Stanley explores the dark continent as a pioneer of science and progress?

Out upon you, narrow-minded fanatics! There is a Great Architect shaping and forming this planet.

Unfortunately for the South she seems to have been the means so far towards accomplishing this evolution, while the North stands off and screams at the *cruelty* of the process.

Was there ever a soul born without pain? Was there ever a soul released without pain?

What other power could have accomplished civilizing as many Africans as slavery has? Send out your missionaries and see how many will be devoured by the cannibals!

The South has accomplished her work, and would if let alone, have rounded it off and finished it more com-

pletely, but she was interfered with, and *now has this mixture of races*, social and political, staring her in the face—a sequel to fanaticism, to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

It was twilight at Fern Brook. Oizelle sat on the back steps reading. Minnie was seated below her, busily sewing on a garment she seemed bent on finishing before the daylight was gone.

Mrs. Carrington was in the back yard, counting her chickens as they went to roost. Eggs and poultry were their main support now.

A little black negro romped with the baby, now a dimpled little beauty, up to all sorts of tricks.

Oizelle closed her book and watched at the baby throw herself into the nurse's arms, clapping her little hands and rolling from side to side, while the little negro laughed and screamed, "Shout! Sister, shout!"

Minnie smiled at the comical little thing, imitating the negroes so perfectly, but Oizelle looked troubled and said:

"Minnie, I would not let the baby play that way!"

"Why? It amuses her and keeps her out of my way until I can finish my work!"

"That is the worst of it. I hate to see that little monkey teach her such outlandish plays and songs! Come, Pearl! Come to aunty!" Laying down her book, Oizelle held out her arms, but baby held on to the little negro.

"Me play wid Susan!"

"But Susan must go home now! Come with aunty! It is getting dark, and grandma is going to turn Lion loose; he will bite Susan!"

"No; me love Susan!"

"Then let her run home. Come! Aunty will tell you about your pretty papa!"

"Me papa! Me pretty papa!" And the little thing toddled instantly to her aunt.

Mrs. Carrington made sure of the number of her chickens, locked the hen house door, then turned to unchain a large mastiff, their only protection in those troublesome times, when a voice called:

"Mother! Don't untie the dog! Mother, don't you know your son?"

George Carrington had stood some time at the corner of the house, watching his baby and his mother. His voice brought his little wife, and sister, all to him. But mother, wife, and sister looked and looked again, trying to recognize the baby's "pretty papa" in that worn, seedy looking individual that stood there calling himself George Carrington.

"Don't you know me, mother!"

"Oh! My son! My son! It can't be you! What has happened?"

"Never mind now! Enough that it is me, and I am with you all again!"

The old hat was removed, hoping the pretty curly head would declare his identity, but George Carrington was prematurely old, gray, careworn. His family must learn to know him through other than their outward senses.

If the dog had been turned loose he would have torn him into pieces for a tramp.

The baby stood afar off, and no coaxing could convince her that was her pretty papa she had been taught to think of so lovingly.

Oizelle got a light and proceeded to prepare him a cup of coffee, while mother and wife strove to realize it was indeed their loved one.

After the coffee was drunk and the excitement somewhat subsided, he sat with his baby on his knee, answering their many questions.

"How was it we received such encouraging letters from you all the time, and yet you look as if you had been at death's door?"

"It was no use letting you know of trouble you couldn't prevent. It was hard enough for me to endure it. When I parted with Uncle Tom I was sure I could make my escape, and did, but reaching Red River I sold my horse, badly as I hated to part with him—he was my only source of revenue—and was preparing to take passage on a boat when I was arrested and thrown into prison

at Alexandria. Some negroes from here, following close upon my heels, recognized the horse, traced me up, informed against me, and again I was in their clutches! God knows what would have become of me if Vernon Terrill had not heard of my trouble and come to my aid. As it was, for months and months I lay in jail. He and Captain Buckner helped me to keep you deceived as to my welfare, and when you sent Captain Buckner the power of attorney to sell the land it seemed a special providence, for nothing else would have effected my release. As it was, the land went for a pittance, compared to its value, and all had to go, every dollar of it, to save me from the penitentiary for simply knocking a negro down that deserved killing! And when I would think of you sitting here in this old log house all alone, with no one to protect you and care for you, and poor Mrs. Gordon, widowed on my account, it was more than I could bear.

"Well, it can't be helped; I will do all I can for you with these two hands, but before high heaven, I am done with negroes!"

"Don't say so, my son; we are sunk in the midst of them. What can we do? And besides the negroes are not so much to blame when you consider the evil influences brought to bear upon them. Slavery kept all the animal in their natures under subjection, and they were docile and kind, but the release was so sudden they are incapable of governing themselves, and are hardly accountable for their animal propensities!"

"And I hardly accountable for my perfect antipathy to them. They don't seem like the same people I used to love and play with, and this evening as I stood and watched my baby, my Pearl, under the influence of that little monkey, I felt like throttling her, actually strangling her as I would an adder."

"Poor boy! how you have suffered!" exclaimed Oizelle, in full sympathy with her brother, while Minnie wept on his shoulder.

"Where is Vernon Terrill?" asked Mrs. Carrington. "I must certainly write and thank him for his very great kindness to my son."

"I expect he is now in California, as he was making all arrangements to go there when my case detained him."

"And you have not been in Baton Rouge?" asked Zelle.

"No, no; when I was released—but I don't know much about it, I was very sick a long time—Vernon Ter-rill took me home with him, and I have been in Eastern Mississippi most of the time, sick and disheartened. Times are very hard there—people too poor to live. Who's there?" George started as he heard a step at the door.

"You are in no further danger, are you, my dear?" asked his wife, seeing his startled look.

"I suppose not, but I have acquired a nervous habit of being uneasy. Who is it?"

"Me, Mistiss; Susan told Chloe she saw you all talking to a strange man as she went off this evening, and I thought—why bless my soul, Mas' George! I thought maybe it was you!"

Before George could say a word, Uncle Tom had him in his arms. "What they been doing to you, my boy? Old Tom aint had one easy minute since you been gone. Something went wrong with you, didn't it? I knowed it. These is strange times, Mas' George, strange times; I never 'spected to see the country in such a fix! No, sir. I must go let Chloe know it's you. Aint no danger, you reckon, Mas' George?"

"No, I think not, Uncle Tom. The negro got well, didn't he?"

"Got well? Umph! Shucks! I wish you had a' laid him out, being's you had to suffer so much about the black rascal!"

"Well, Uncle Tom, you make me feel like old times. They haven't made a white man out of you yet, have they?"

"You mean they haven't made a low down nigger out of me yet. No, sir; no, sir."

George was tired and overcome by the excitement of getting home, and his mother, uneasy at his extreme nervousness, suggested he retire early.

But before he could get to bed dear old Aunt Chloe had come to see Mas' George. "She couldn't rest till morning without seeing him."

The devotion of those two old negroes had a good effect upon George; it soothed him, and seemed to renew his confidence somewhat in the negro.

"You see," his mother said, "we can't condemn the whole race while Tom and Chloe live."

"And yet, you must admit they are exceptions. They always were more like white people than negroes."

George recuperated rapidly under the loving kindness of home folk, though he stuck to his resolution to have nothing more to do with negroes.

He wrote Colonel Harlan, asking him to build comfortable tenant houses at Fern Brook and he would fill them with white families and undertake to cultivate all the land. Under this suggestion, several nice frame houses were built. The old log house was now so full of cracks and the floors so uncomfortable, the Carringtons moved into one of the houses and Mrs. Gordon into another.

Richard Gordon was now a bright, energetic boy, and took his twenty acres of land and made very good crops with a little assistance.

A great many families were now moving in from Mississippi, Florida and Alabama, so George soon got the houses filled and land taken by good people, though very, very poor. But they worked together in harmony, and all made a living.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FARMINGDALE had been comparatively quiet since Adolph's and Rose's escape, though Topsy staid on and managed her little world. She was a source of great annoyance to Aunt Chloe, though she was indispensable to Liza and Pete. In their trials and tribulations they never would have survived but for Mrs. Smith's counsel

and suggestions. Now a new field seemed opening up, fitted to Mrs. Smith's peculiar genius; provosts and soldiers all had disappeared; civil government restored, and now comes the gay and festive politician.

Farmingdale was in the center of the "black belt"—the "negro belt"—along the Brazos. It was the black man who had to be cajoled; the black baby kissed; and offices filled with black votes, though not necessarily with black men; not if the white-skinned scum of society could help it.

Once more the tug of war began—the war of votes, of ballot box. No use for the old fashion, respectable white man to vote; he was too much in the minority to amount to a row of pins. You could tell the old honest, high-minded aristocrat now by his "seedy" look and indifference to politics.

George Carrington looked calmly on; his education was limited, and he had now to work very hard, but he was quick, honest, and all common sense.

One old gentleman, Mr. Hill, from Alabama, a tenant on the Fern Brook land, had taken a great fancy to George, and besides their working interest they had fallen in the habit of discussing a great many other subjects as they rested from their labor.

One day George came to him with something of his long ago boyish levity twinkling in his eye.

"What's up, George?" Mr. Hill asked, noticing with pleasure George's cheerful, mischievous expression.

"I have just been having a talk with Uncle Tom. The old man is about to be eat out of house and home by the candidates."

"Yes; I thought as much, from what I could hear."

"Aunt Chloe is a number one cook, you know, and her fried chickens and chicken potpies are not to be sneezed at, in fact they are enough to make most any man turn Radical; besides Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. 'Liza, and Mr. Pete Beck are a social element not to be met with every day, and our 'white candidates' are reveling on the fat of the land over there."

"They don't seem to be confined to the Northern Racial either!"

"Northern! No, I should think not! These fellows are to the manor born. They are used to fried chicken and nigger too, and they are gulping down the whole, in order to get a slice of the political chicken pie."

Mr. Hill laughed.

"Well, now Mr. Hill, of course our day has passed politically; but I intend to beat these fellows at their own game."

"How do you propose to do it?"

"You know that man Stubbs, running for the Legislature? He was born in Tennessee, fought for the South, but now he puts one arm around the nigger, the other around me, and twists his principles to cover all votes."

"Well, you can't cope with such a man as that."

"No; but I can beat him at his own game, I tell you; I wouldn't vote for such a man as he is. I had rather send a negro to the Legislature, and that is what I am going to do. I am going to have Uncle Tom nominated against him, and we will elect him."

"That will be rich," Mr. Hill said, "and I believe you; I had much rather vote for Tom than Stubbs. I was not thinking of voting at all, but I believe it will be a good idea, at least it will be fun."

"I think Aunt Chloe ought to be paid for her chickens and trouble cooking them, and *eight dollars a day* will about cover it, don't you think?"

Mr. Hill laughed. "I will give my vote towards it."

George went off to his dinner laughing. Reaching home, his little daughter came bounding out to meet him, her curls floating over her shoulders, her face beaming with childish happiness, both hands filled with candy.

"Well?" inquired her father.

"Mr. Stubbs gave me ever so much candy!"

"Mr. Stubbs? Has he been here?"

"Yes; all the morning, talking to aunty."

"To aunty?" A mixed expression of indignation and then amusement spread over George's face.

Entering the house, dinner was waiting, and as the

family got seated at the table, George remarked: "And so you have had company all the morning?"

"Yes, a Mr. Stubbs called to see you, but as you were not at the house he entertained us with a graphic description of the battle of Shiloh; says he was wounded there; seems to be a nice man, a good Southern soldier any way, and so it was our duty to entertain him, though we could scarcely spare the time, dinner had to be got, and we left 'Zelle to talk with him," said Mrs. Carrington.

"Did you invite him to stay to dinner?" asked George with a quizzical smile.

"Certainly," answered 'Zelle.

"Good thing he didn't accept; Minnie's cooking could hardly compare with Aunt Chloe's."

"Why, I am sure Minnie cooks very nicely. What do you mean?"

"He didn't tell you then he was expected to dine with Mrs. Beck at the fashionable English hour, somewhere towards night, and that while he condescended to talk with Miss Carrington this morning, to-night he would be entertained by Mrs. Smith and 'Liza down at Mr. Beck's."

"Why, George Carrington! what do you mean?" exclaimed Oizelle, turning crimson, while his wife and mother gazed at him in astonishment.

"I mean it is a good thing I didn't come to the house while he was in it; I should have kicked him out of it!"

"You don't mean he is that candidate for the Legislature we hear Topsy and 'Liza talk about?" asked Minnie.

"He is the gentleman."

"Why, I thought he was a negro!"

"Running on the negro ticket, but a white skin and Southern born!"

"How disgraceful!" said 'Zelle.

"Well, take my advice; hereafter, instead of entertaining candidates, set the dog on them; all but one. I am going to put a gentleman in the field. You may entertain him, and if elected—"

"You! Why what have you got to do with politics?" they all asked.

"I am going to nominate a gentleman for the Legislature!"

"A gentleman! Who?"

"Uncle Tom!"

"Uncle Tom?"

"Yes, Uncle Tom! He is a gentleman if not a scholar, and before that fellow Stubbs shall get there, I will stump the county for Uncle Tom."

"The country certainly has come to a pretty pass," sighed Mrs. Carrington; "but, my son, have nothing to do with politics. Let's attend strictly to making a living and we will have as much as we can do."

"I won't take any part in politics, mother; but Uncle Tom has the legal right to be a member of the Legislature and I would rather he was there than Stubbs—a turncoat, a skalawag!"

George got his hat, and going on back to the field overtook Uncle Tom. I will give him a few instructions about his legal rights, thought George.

"Well, Uncle Tom, I've been thinking about it, and instead of this fellow Stubbs going to the Legislature, why not you?"

"Me? Oh! go long, Mas' George! What you talking about?"

"I mean just what I say. The United States has given the negroes the right to vote and the right to hold office; this man Stubbs and all these white men that talk to the negroes about voting don't talk to them about holding office. But if you have got the right to vote you have the right to hold office, and you are the very gentleman to represent this district, and I am going to see that you do it."

"Now, Mas' George, you are making fun of me. What does a ignorant old nigger like me know about Legislature?"

"You don't have to know anything!"

"Why, hush up, boy; don't I know? I used to go with your pa to Baton Rouge when he was a member, and I tell you it takes a scholar to make laws!"

"Oh, yes; that is the way it used to be, but it don't

make any difference now. You just get all of your own color to vote for you instead of that white man, and I'll manage the rest."

"I don't know about that; don't seem to me a nigger knows anything about them sorts o' things. Why, see here, Mas' George, I can't even sign my name."

"Oh, yes you can; I taught you that a long time ago."

"But I done forgot everything like that. Since freedom, I done had so much trouble, and so much work to do, I done forgot it all entirely."

"O well, I'll soon teach you how again, and then you wont have to work so hard, just sit up and vote; follow your file leader and draw your eight dollars a day, send it to Pete, and he can run the crop."

"Yes, yes; that's so, but I aint got no file leader; you see I thinks like you; I aint no Radical."

"Oh, pshaw! It don't count anything to think like me now. You are a negro, and as such can get this place; now make up your mind to go for it, because I've set my heart on putting you there."

"All right; if you want me to go, I'll do anything you say."

"I want you to go. You keep still, I'll manage it."

At noon George was literally in the hands of his friend. The more George thought about it, the more determined he was Uncle Tom should be a member of the Legislature.

The next morning as he started to the field, he said to his wife: "You needn't have dinner for me to-day. I am working close to Farmingdale; I will go in and make Aunt Chloe give me a cup of coffee."

At noon George went into Farmingdale. He found the coast clear and Aunt Chloe busy cooking a good dinner.

"How do you do, Aunt Chloe?"

"Why, to be sure, Mas' George, I'm passin' well. You come to see Aunt Chloe?"

"Yes, I thought I would come just at dinner time and you would give me a good cup of coffee."

"You thought just right too. Come here, 'Liza, and reach me that china cup and saucer. Take that chair,

Mas' George, and I reckon we can give you a little more than coffee; old Chloe aint forgot how to cook yet."

"No, I understand you are keeping your hand in—still cooking for white folks."

Pete and Topsy had now come in to dinner, but seeing George seated at the table, stood at a respectful distance.

George, having an object in view, turned very pleasantly, and said in a jocular way:

"Good day, Mr. Beck, Mrs. Smith. You were not expecting me to dine with you to-day."

They both smiled good humoredly.

"I was afraid that fellow Stubbs would get away with all Aunt Chloe's fried chicken, so I thought I would come in for my share to-day."

"It aint the first time you ever eat Aunt Chloe's fried chicken either, and bless God, I hope it wont be the last."

"No, I hope not, Aunt Chloe. But Pete, it seems to me you colored men are acting very foolish."

"Why, how's that M'—ah," Pete hemmed and hawed and came within an ace of saying Mas' George, it came so natural, but Mrs. Smith's presence checked him, and he stammered out,

"How's that, sir?"

"Why, running that man Stubbs for the Legislature. Why don't you run one of your own color? You've got as much right to the office as you have to vote."

"Yes, I know, but——"

"Well, I have made up my mind that your father (George had to be very careful not to say your daddy or Uncle Tom; he must play like they were white folks) is the man to represent this district."

"Who? Daddy!" And Pete forgot himself and gave a real nigger laugh.

"Why! Mind your manners, Pete. What you laughing about?"

"Why he aint smart enough to go to no Legislature!" Pete went on without paying any attention to Aunt Chloe.

"There you are mistaken, Pete; he is smart enough and good enough to go to this Legislature, and if you are smart you will get him there, too. Why, see here, he

would get eight dollars a day, fifty-six dollars a week. He could send you the money and you could hire the crop worked."

"Why; do they get that much?"

"Certainly they do, and that is what these lazy white men are after. You think about it now, and talk it up to your colored friends; vote for your own color."

"There is a heap of sense in that, Mr. Beck," remarked Mrs. Smith.

"The Carringtons always were smart," said Pete.

"Yes, they was," Aunt Chloe asserted positively; "and Mas' George aint no 'ception to the rule." Dear old Aunt Chloe said Mas' George just like she would say honey or any other term of endearment, and she never learned any better. "What he says is right. Now mind me."

"Well, I say Mr. Beck, Sr., has got to go to the Legislature. Now, Mr. Beck, Jr., you and Mrs. Smith go to work for him; make every colored man of your acquaintance vote for him."

"That was splendid coffee, Aunt Chloe; thank you."

"Come in again, Mas' George; any time you feel like you want some of old Aunt Chloe's cooking."

George left Pete and Topsy in an ecstasy. He had sown the seed.

George continued to sow seed and drop pointers whenever occasion presented.

The sturdy old white men of the country laughed at it as George Carrington's huge joke, and George assured them it would never do for independent citizens of a free republic to look idly on and not vote; he was getting up a straight out and out honest candidate so that they all might vote, consciences commending.

When the grand rally came, and Mr. Stubbs was sure of the nomination, and consequently election, George had the Rev. Mr. Alvis "cocked," ready to "go off," and he did go off, on the "*color line*."

The white candidates squirmed and tried to rally their men, but George had another "big gun" ready. The most able white gentleman of the community, one who had the confidence of black and white, rose, and with a

good deal of elegance and dignity, commended the nomination of a colored man by colored men, and then appealed to his white friends, "as they had no choice in the matter it seemed presumption to have anything to say, but he would say this much, Mr. Thomas Beck was a gentleman from association; he had absorbed all the high toned principles of his former master, and if his colored friends saw fit to nominate him, he for one would cast his vote for him—complimentary."

Mr. Beck was nominated by acclamation, and Uncle Tom became a member of the Legislature!

CHAPTER XIX.

GEORGE CARRINGTON enjoyed Uncle Tom's election. Naturally he was a gay fellow, and always, when a boy, up to some prank or joke, and now, notwithstanding his reverse of fortune and all his trouble, he was so in love with his wife and baby, and so devoted to his mother and sister, his old self at times would assert itself.

He had gone to work so manfully, and was such a philosopher about everything, he was growing robust; fresh air and exercise was a telling tonic, and he reveled in splendid health.

His wife and mother idolized him, and in working for and contributing to his daily comfort and pleasure they found their chief happiness. Pearl was a bright, playful child; like her father, practical and cheerful, and filled in the interstices of their new life, like a bright ribbon woven in and out the darker warp.

Oizelle stood alone, and afar off, though in their very midst, helping and working as one of them.

The election of Uncle Tom to the Legislature did not amuse her. She was horrified at it.

"How you can laugh, George, when you think of a negro, sitting in the legislative halls of the South, I can not understand!"

"Well, I don't exactly laugh at that, my dear sister; that does sound pretty badly; I am simply laughing at beating this low-down white man that has no fixed principles, and who would steal as quick as he would turn around."

"To me it seems deplorable that such white men have it in their power to get into politics."

"That is what politics means now. The only thing that troubles me is Uncle Tom is too good for it."

This did not satisfy Oizelle. It was the most humiliating thing she had to think of.

Going to her room, she threw herself into a chair, clasped her hands over her head, and rocked to and fro, thinking, thinking, till her brain grew wild. What did it all mean? Was there no man in the South in this hour of her trial to avert all this? She thought of Vernon Terrill; he was young, talented, had offered his life for the South, it had been spared—for what purpose? Bound hand and foot, politically, what could he do, what could any man do?

Then her thoughts flew to St. Clare. All he had ever said was true—the South was doomed.

"Oh, St. Clare! St. Clare!" she cried in her agony—and almost thought "would I had gone into exile with him." But thoughts of her father dying on the field of battle, cementing those principles with his life's blood, checked her, and she exclaimed aloud, rising from her chair, "All for the South! All for the honor of the South!"

Turning, she encountered Aunt Chloe, dressed clean and nice, her face beaming with smiles.

"Lord bless me, Missie, how white you look! You ain't been sick is you?"

"No, Aunt Chloe, only sick at heart."

"Bless the child; I been telling Mistiss how bad I feel 'bout you, shut up here just like you's in prison. Mistiss and Miss Minnie they so took up with Mas' George, and he getting so healthy and strong they ain't paying no 'tention to my blessed lamb. Never mind, honey, jist wait till Tom gits off to the Legislature; I gwyne to

leave Pete and 'Liza with their Mrs. Smith to do the best they kin, and Chloe's coming up here to look after her child. Mistiss and Tom always did pet Mas' George, and you belonged to your pa and me. You lie down and rest yourself; I's come up to get dinner to-day."

Oizelle was glad to hear that. Glad to be released even for an hour from duties so distasteful to her. Not that she could not cook, and do anything else her physical strength would bear her out in—but at times she was completely ennuied. If she could have wept, shed tears as most women do, it would have passed off like an April shower, and the sunshine been the brighter after; but Oizelle had always been of a peculiar temperament. With the finest, most sensative womanly feelings, her devotion to her father, and her long and early engagement to St. Clare had so intimately associated her with them, her mind had as it were, been formed on a masculine mold. St. Clare's was a remarkably high order of intellect; he was an uncommon boy, more of a scientist though, a thinker in advance of his age, and with his mind's eye way ahead, he was engulfed in a whirlpool immediately under his feet.

Oizelle, when a girl, was not simply content to be a companion for St. Clare, as girls usually are—loved as a flower or a bird; something to amuse him in his leisure hours. No; she was to be his equal. Not a thought flashed across his brain that could not be caught by her's and all its depths sounded alike. Mind to mind, they loved each other as only two souls in full unison can. Yes, she was torn asunder—the very complement of herself gone. What was to become of her, left alone in the midst of the most uncongenial surroundings?

The new house made no pretensions to refinement. It was simply a shelter—bare walls and old furniture, a few old worn rugs; her books and paintings were really all that was left to tell of a superior day. Oizelle was a fine musician, and if she had had a piano, often she could have soothed her overwrought nerves with deep reverberating chords, attuned to her own soul-full heart. But that was now beyond her wildest hope, and her voice

choked. Birds warble in the spring time. The spring time of Oizelle's life had passed.

Reaching her hat, she passed out into the sunshine and walked over to the old log house. It stood now vacant, but associated with some pleasant hours. She went in and wandered through the rooms, thinking of Fanny and Colonel Morrison, wondering if she would ever see them again. To be divided by an abyss of poverty was worse than oceans rolling between.

Seating herself on the steps, she thought of her lovely home in Louisiana, of the dear old river, and tried to think how the boats looked passing by. And then she thought how desolate it all must be—the houses gone, no vestige of home left. Mrs. Vance a lunatic—dead.

Again Oizelle was promenading the floor of the old log house thinking, thinking; "what fiend could have prompted the destruction of our homes—musical instruments, libraries? Surely all that was not necessary to Federal success; they could have conquered us without that! Could it be those soldiers, men in Federal uniform, had imbibed from Mrs. Stowe, from 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' the idea we were all human monsters, and fire and brimstone our just portion? And what of them?" Oizelle paused near a window and looked out towards Angy's grave. "And what of them—conscientious? Yes, they may have been conscientious. Mrs. Stowe must have been conscientious in writing 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Yes, she was conscientious," and a cynical smile passed over Oizelle's usually sweet face, as she said aloud, "So was Bloody Mary, Queen of England, *conscientious!*"

With a deep sigh, Oizelle went out to Angy's grave. "Poor Angy, I wonder how freedom would have affected her." Stooping, she removed some fallen branches from the grave, then turned her steps towards home, thinking "Ah! Aunt Chloe, it is mistaken kindness to do my work for me, giving me time to think. No, it wont do to think."

They were all in the kitchen, laughing and talking with Aunt Chloe. George met 'Zelle at the door.

"Been out for a walk, beauty?" He still thought his sister perfectly beautiful.

"Yes, I took advantage of Aunt Chloe's assistance," Oizelle answered cheerfully, trying to conceal all evidence of her struggle with the past for the last two hours.

"I hope your walk has given you an appetite, for I believe Aunt Chloe has prepared us a good dinner."

"Mr. Carrington thinks no one can cook but Aunt Chloe," said Minnie.

"Never you mind, honey, he 'bleeged to think what he was raised on is good."

"You are right, Aunt Chloe. These white cooks do well enough when you can't do any better, but if you want anything good, just let a black hand have a finger in the pie."

"Umph! Mac' George just like he use' to be. I look 'round 'spectin to see them pretty curls tossin' on top of his head. What makes you keep your hair cut so short now? Don't seem like nothing 's like it use' to be."

"So much the worse for the present. I am sure this dinner is like it used to be. Come, mother, Oizelle, let's enjoy it while it is hot; and don't forget, all of you, while you eat, *it was cooked by a legislator's wife!* Here's to your health, Mrs. Beck."

No one could keep from laughing, George was so ridiculous. Even Oizelle was amused to see Aunt Chloe laughing behind her apron, trying to keep her dignity while she waited on them.

That evening George rode into the depot, bought a Galveston News, and returning home, threw it into Oizelle's lap as she sat on the steps.

Turning to the special telegrams, she scanned the news of the State, when suddenly the paper dropped from her hands.

"What's the matter?" George asked, seating himself on the steps by her.

"You may think it fun, a big joke, to send Uncle Tom to the Legislature, but what do you think of Adolph as a member?"

"Adolph? Impossible!"

"Read that telegram from Richmond."

"Fort Bend County?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Adolph St. Clare will represent his constituency with honor at the coming session of the Legislature."

"Was there ever anything more disgraceful! Oh! that I should ever live to see such humiliation. Adolph, a complete monkey, an ape!"

"My dear sister, we have nothing to do with it."

"Nothing to do with it? George Carrington, don't talk like that; we will have something to do with it; it will have something to do with us. Mark my words."

"Oizelle, what is the matter with you?" asked her mother, coming out.

"You had better ask what is the matter with the country, when Adolph St. Clare, as he calls himself, can be sent to the Legislature."

"Adolph? It can't be possible! Where is he?"

"He is sent from Fort Bend County."

"Well, what next?"

"God only knows."

"What you all saying 'bout Adolph?" asked Aunt Chloe, who was just starting home.

"Why, he is a member of the Legislature, as well as Uncle Tom."

"A nasty, yaller rascal; he ought to be hung!"

"Well, maybe he will get his deserts now they have started him to the Legislature."

"George, don't talk that way; it is too serious a matter."

"What have we got to do with the country?"

"We have got to live in it, unless we can go with Colonel Groves to Brazil."

"That reminds me, I heard this evening Liendo had been sold."

"Who was able to buy it?"

"Some foreigners, philanthropists, coming in to colonize and educate the 'poor down-trodden colored race.'"

"Down-trodden? And a set of monkeys going to make laws for us!"

"Yes; they will have about as much to do with making

laws as we have. A certain set of politicians make the laws, my dear sister, and rule this country."

"What did Liendo sell for?" asked Mrs. Carrington.

"Twenty thousand dollars cash, including ever so much land."

"I suppose now the Groves will leave the country. How sad to loose such citizens."

"How fortunate to be able to leave such a country!" Oizelle exclaimed.

"I don't know; it seems to me it is the wrong policy, as they say, for the old substantial citizens to sacrifice their homes and desert their native land in this her sorest hour of trial."

"You can't blame them for deserting a sinking ship." Oizelle was bitter, and she tossed the paper to her brother and went to her room.

CHAPTER XX.

THE next morning Uncle Tom came up to discuss Adolph's election. "Don't seem like I care much about going if such a man as he can get there."

"Never mind that; you are in for it now," said George. "You will have to have some pretty good clothes; that will command Adolph's respect—he wont trouble you."

"I know he wont trouble me, but—"

"If he gets to putting on airs, you might have him arrested for bigamy."

"What 's that?"

"Having more wives than the law allows him."

"Oh! I don't believe the law 's 'lowed him any yet."

George's joke was beginning to sour on him. Now that he had really carried his point towards Stubbs, this mixture of negroes in the Legislature was a little too much for him.

But it was not too much for Topsy and Pete. They had been strutting and swelling ever since Uncle Tom's

election. Now, if Adolph was to be there too, they imagined how in the seventh heaven Rose must be, and Mrs. Smith shook her head and laid her plans. 'Liza was considerably crestfallen, but Mrs. Smith encouraged her.

"You've got more rights there than she has. Your father and husband will both be there, and so will you, Mrs. St. Clare. Don't you trouble yourself, I will arrange that."

Uncle Tom caught the idea from George about being well dressed, and so he spared no pains in making himself look like a gentleman.

With valise in hand he came up to tell them all good-bye and get a few more final instruction from Mas' George.

"Why, Tom, you look like old times," Mrs. Carrington said, "if we didn't know any better we would think you just starting for Saratoga."

"Lord, Mistiss, I was heap younger in them days. This is a powerful queer trip I'm starting on, but Mas' George says it will be all right. But, now 'bout my name, Mas' George, I don't believe I'm gwyne to be able to sign it."

"Make your + mark; it's all the same."

"Well, good-bye; I wish you was going instid of me."

The family looked after Uncle Tom as he left.

"A good, honest old soul; true as steel," George said.

We little thought when we left our home we were coming to Texas to make a plowhand of George and a legislator of Uncle Tom.

The colored members made their + marks and took their seats in the legislative hall, just like they had been there "in memoriam."

All right; "Uncle Sam!" all right! They drew their per diem, and continued to draw their per diem.

Uncle Tom was sober and economical, and the most of his salary was sent regularly to Pete to be invested in labor that was to produce tenfold, and be garnered again in the near future.

But Topsy looked at the crisp greenbacks and whispered in Pete's ear:

"Rose; don't you want to see Rose? Save it up, and when you get enough, take 'Liza up there and make Adolph take her back. You going to let your own sister be treated that way? Just take me up there, I'll make him do what's right. We can all go. What's the use of staying here putting all that money in the ground for cotton worms to eat up. You aint no man at all if you can't save that money, dress yourself as fine as Adolph, go up there and get Rose back; we can keep a boarding house for the colored members; Mrs. Beck could make a fortune there."

'Liza was carried away with the project. She had already had some experience as chambermaid and she thought if they could get to Austin, open a boarding house, with her mother to cook, they would indeed make a fortune.

Pete said "it wouldn't do to tell his mother anything about it; she was such a white folks nigger she would go right straight and tell them Carringtons; they would write to the old man and stop the money." No! They must not let the old man know anything about it; they must slip off, and when they all got to Austin the old man would have to take care of them, and then they could send for the old woman.

Accordingly Topsy was the first one to take her departure. She went to the nearest depot town to go into the dress making business, so she said.

Aunt Chloe was too happy to get rid of her. Now she had her children all to herself, she began to feel comfortable and natural once more. She couldn't do enough for Pete and 'Liza; cooking all their favorite dishes, staying closely at home with them, and doing everything herself. But in spite of her kindness Pete sulked and 'Liza moped, threatening to go to town too.

Mrs. Smith certainly went into the dressing business; not only herself, but she got everything ready for Pete and 'Liza. She was a splendid business woman, and became Pete's treasurer; took charge of every cent of

Uncle Tom's per diem, and when she gave the word "ready," Pete and 'Liza left their too confiding old mother. Covered by the mantle of night, they reached their friend, arrayed themselves as gentleman and ladies and boarded a train for Austin.

The Hon. Mr. St. Clare was at his post. Not so attentive to legislative business as to a numerous circle of colored ladies, admirers and friends of his distinguished looking wife—a walking advertisement for milliners and mantuamakers.

The Hon. Mr. St. Clare was "au fait," and unexceptionable in his polite attention to the Hon. Mr. Beck.

The beautiful "City of Hills" never looked lovelier. The Colorado curved like a silver line from Mount Bonnell, under the railroad bridge, on through the garden valley lands, reflecting skies bluer and more gorgeous than famed Italia.

Classic city of the West, your capitolian hill rises high above the groveling things of earth, but scenes have been enacted e'en in the shadow of your grandeur that defy detectives and prove men a little lower than the demons.

Behold the actors as they arrive in "propria persona." The Central train comes puffing and panting to the station; all is hurry and confusion; black passengers jostle against white; the sensitive, inexperienced shrink from the hurrying crowd, but the experienced traveler, Mrs. Smith, clinches her checks and sweeps into the waiting room.

Mr. Pete Beck is perfect in his stovepipe and tan kids, while 'Liza's plump, well curved figure suggests the dimpled beauty in her gray traveling costume, dainty gloves and handkerchief, a "love-of-a-hat," with face thickly veiled.

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Beck, Jr., interview a hackman with seeming satisfaction, for the party instantly enter a city carriage and dash up the Avenue, then turn, and are lost to sight.

CHAPTER XXI.

GEORGE CARRINGTON had turned his last furrow and was unhitching his mule from the plow at 12 o'clock, when he happened to think of Aunt Chloe and wondered what had become of her; he hadn't seen her for several days. Leading his mule down to Fern Brook to water, he staked him out, and walked over to Farmingdale. Nearing the house, a death-like stillness pervaded the premises, and he saw Aunt Chloe sitting out in the yard on a dilapidated old rustic seat, swaying back and forth, moaning in great distress; he hurried to her.

"Aunt Chloe, what in the world is the matter with you?"

"Oh! Mas' George, Mas' George!"

"Are you sick?"

"No, sir; no, sir; my heart 's clean broke, Mas' George."

"Anything the matter with Uncle Tom?"

"No, sir, Mas' George; my chil'n done run off and left me!"

"Run off? I reckon not; they will come back."

"No, sir; they took all their things, and Pete 's got all his daddy's money."

"He has? A rascal!"

"Oh! Mas' George, 'taint Pete, its that Mrs. Smith; done took my chil'n clean away from me. She done conjur Pete so he follow her everywhere."

"Why, Aunt Chloe, you don't believe any such nonsense as that?"

"You don't know, Mas' George. When Rose run away from him, Pete jist give up, and e'en a'most died; and Mrs. Smith, she worked spells on him. She never lef' him day nor night, and he had to swallow a silver dollar up and down—up and down, till he liked to died; and he had to keep givin' her money to keep the spells off."

"Keep giving her the devil! Pete ought to be hung. You get up, Aunt Chloe, and come go home with me."

"No, sir; I can't go leave the house. Them plow hands be coming to dinner now."

"Is their dinner ready?"

"Yes, sir; nothing but meat and bread. I aint got no money to pay 'um off, either."

"Well, Aunt Chloe, give them their dinner and come on up to the house; we must write Uncle Tom about it, and see what can be done."

George went home late for dinner.

"What has kept you, my son?" Mrs. Carrington asked, seeing he looked troubled.

"I went over to see Aunt Chloe. The old lady is in a great deal of trouble—Pete and 'Liza have run off."

"Run off? They are free and of age. What did they run off for?"

"They have taken all the money Uncle Tom's been sending home, and she has nothing to pay the hands. Pete, a lazy rascal, has been hiring all the work done, and has now left Aunt Chloe in the lurch, without even supplies. I must write Uncle Tom about it."

The Carringtons were greatly troubled about Aunt Chloe, especially when George told them about her believing in "conjuring." They could not believe it possible that Aunt Chloe, raised in the house with them, could believe in such stuff. They had noticed for some time how much like the other negroes she had begun to talk. When she was first freed she spoke almost as correctly as her mistress. She was as neat as a pin, too, in her dress, but of late she was growing negligent, and it was now nothing unusual to see Aunt Chloe really dirty.

"Poor old woman! I wonder why she don't come on! I will keep the coffee hot for her," Oizelle said.

George wrote to Uncle Tom and rode in to mail the letter. Coming back, he learned from his wife that Aunt Chloe had not been up, and his mother and Oizelle had gone down to see her.

George rode down too.

Mrs. Carrington found Aunt Chloe sitting in the kitchen over a pile of dirty dishes, with a hot fever.

"Chloe, why don't you go to bed? You are not well enough to sit up."

"Oh, Mistiss! I can't go near that bed; she's put 'conjur balls' in all my beds and pillows."

"Chloe, you must not talk such stuff as that. You have too much sense to believe in 'conjur balls.'"

"She's done 'conjured' my chil'n, Mistiss."

"Hush, Chloe. Your children need whipping for treating you so badly."

"O, Mistiss! You don't know her. She jist like them pictures Mas' George used to show me. She's a 'voodoo,' Mistiss."

Oizelle met her brother on the gallery and told him how sick Aunt Chloe was, and how she was affected.

"We must take her away from here," George said, instantly, and went to get Mr. Hill to come with his little wagon and take her.

Oizelle went in, found her mother bathing Aunt Chloe's head and getting her quiet.

"Aunt Chloe, we are going to take you home with us and nurse you till you get well, for you can't stay here by yourself."

"Yes, m'am." She assented to everything they said, and when Mr. Hill came Mrs. Carrington and Oizelle got into the wagon with Aunt Chloe and took her home with them.

George spoke to the hands about keeping up with the work, but he and Mr. Hill both thought it would be best for Uncle Tom to abandon the idea of making a crop.

They fixed a comfortable bed for Aunt Chloe, one they assured her had no "conjuring" about it, and they got the old lady to lie down. Then 'Zelle cooked a real dainty lunch, and coaxed her to eat just a little, because she cooked it.

George wrote another letter to Uncle Tom telling him how sick Aunt Chloe was, and when he went to mail it, received one from Uncle Tom telling of Pete's, 'Liza's and Mrs. Smith's arrival in Austin.

But as Uncle Tom had to get some white member to write for him, he couldn't say what he wanted to, therefore when he received another letter telling him Aunt Chloe was sick, he got a leave of absence and ran down to see about her.

He was very much troubled at Pete's and Mrs. Smith's high handed ways, but did not know how to help it.

George told him to go back, he would take care of Aunt Chloe; he couldn't afford to lose his money by resigning, and he had better sub-let his land and write to Mr. Granger about it.

All this was done, and Uncle Tom returned to the Legislature in much perturbation of mind.

Adolph had fallen in with Topsy about the boarding house and they were now running quite an establishment in the southern part of the city.

Uncle Tom gave Pete to understand he needn't depend on getting a dollar out of him, and as they were surrounded by a set Uncle Tom had not been used to, he saw very little of them. He made several efforts to get 'Liza away from them, and in his eagerness to influence her and get her back to her mother, Mrs. Smith found many an opportunity to still abstract Uncle Tom's per diem.

Mr. Granger came up and found Farmingdale so dilapidated, he prevailed on Mr. Hill to take charge of things, as this was his last year of lease, for he understood Colonel Harlan had sold the place to a Mr. Gray, a man of some means, who would build in the spring.

The Legislature closed and Uncle Tom returned home with very little money in his pocket.

Aunt Chloe had had a severe spell of sickness and she and Uncle Tom hardly knew which way to turn to make a living. The Carringtons were not able to feed them. Cooking was all Aunt Chloe could do, so she and Uncle Tom went to the railroad station and kept a coffee stand.

CHAPTER XXII.

OIZELLE found the summer unusually long and tedious. The house was not ceiled and the fierce July sun beamed down on the pine plank, hot and oppressive. She had been trying to teach Pearl, but she was an active, lively child, not at all studious, and preferred climbing trees and swinging in the grape vines. She said it was too hot to study, and it was.

Mrs. Gordon struggled to feed and clothe her children, and tried to teach them as well as she could under the circumstances. Oizelle had offered to teach them, but Richard had so much work to do he could only study at night. The girls found it impossible to leave their mother, for, in addition to their domestic duties, they also helped their brother. They preferred helping in the field to cooking for and feeding hired hands. Richard and his sisters worked together, and it was nothing unusual to see Mrs. Gordon and her children in the field picking cotton.

George Carrington found it impossible to become reconciled to this. Mrs. Gordon hadn't heard from her brother, Colonel Morrison, for many months. The last letter she received stated he was trying to raise money to send for her and her children. He had not succeeded very well, and shortly after their return home Mrs. Manard died. Captain Manard had a severe cough and was dying with consumption, contracted from exposure during the war.

George was so distressed at Mrs. Gordon's condition he wrote Captain Buckner to know if he could give him any information concerning Colonel Morrison, and received the sad news of his death. He had become a cotton buyer and went to live in Shreveport, where he and Fanny both died of yellow fever during that fearful epidemic. A fatality seemed to attend them all. War and pestilence scourged the whole South.

Mr. Hill had charge of Mr. Granger's business and in the fall of the year superintended the steam gin, ginning the cotton of the whole neighborhood. Bob Mitchell, a burly

negro, had charge of the engine and gave Mr. Hill no little trouble, so he spoke to George Carrington about it:

"I wish you and Richard Gordon understood ginning. I would get Mr. Granger to discharge the negro and give you the job."

"I think with Uncle Tom's assistance we could do it, for he is one of the finest engineers I ever knew. He used to manage our sugar mill, and when a boy I was pretty good at it myself. I am a natural machinist."

The negro continued perfectly insubordinate, and Mr. Hill reported to Mr. Granger, suggesting he could get Uncle Tom again.

Bob Mitchell was discharged, and Uncle Tom, George Carrington and Richard Gordon took charge of the gin.

Aunt Chloe continued to run her coffee stand, and Mr. Hill was congratulating himself upon things working so harmoniously at the gin.

One day he was absent, and Bob Mitchell came to see him on business. He sat 'round waiting all the forenoon. Near noon Richard Gordon was hurrying with a basket of cotton, and as he passed up the steps, Bob jostled against him and came near pitching him off. Richard remonstrated and Bob became furious, cursing the whole white layout.

George ordered him away from the gin, whereupon he drew a knife and attacked George, cutting him in several places fatally.

The negro fled and Richard's screams brought Uncle Tom from the engine.

Other tenants, hauling their cotton, rushed to the scene, where Uncle Tom held his young master in his arms, and with superhuman strength carried him and laid him upon a pile of cotton. Then sinking on his knees beside him, prayed God to save him. "Any way but this!" the old man prayed, "any way but this!" George opened his eyes and looked imploringly at Uncle Tom, but before his family could reach the gin his life had ebbed away.

Oizelle was the only one that had any presence of mind left. The poor little wife and child were screaming; the dear old mother had one spasm after another. Oizelle

was desperate in her despair, but cared for her mother and directed everything.

Uncle Tom helped to lift the lifeless form of Mas' George into the wagon, and seated himself by it. The family was put into another wagon and all carried to the house. Uncle Tom never left the body. Mr. Hill superintended all arrangements, and he was buried in the little mott of timber where Angy slept peacefully.

Uncle Tom moved Aunt Chloe back to help take care of Mistiss, and he continued working at the gin.

George's loss was not only severely felt by his own family, but by all the tenants. He was so energetic and cheerful under all misfortunes, he was sincerely loved by all, and had the negro been caught he would have been lynched upon the spot.

Uncle Tom continued working at the gin the rest of the season. He and Aunt Chloe stayed with the Carringtons until Christmas, banked the potatoes, their corn was already gathered and cribbed, and George had the little place in perfect order, hogs in the pen, fattened, ready for killing. Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe did all that—packed the meat away, made the sausage and attended to the lard.

Mrs. Carrington had at last more than she could bear and rally from. Oizelle and Minnie had to exert themselves to subdue their feelings for their mother's sake.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe whispered together out at their work. They knew they couldn't stay there much longer, and they hated to leave, and they were troubled all the time thinking of Pete and 'Liza.

One night Aunt Chloe was in the room with her mistress, and Uncle Tom came in, took off his hat, and stood near where Mrs. Carrington lay.

"Mistiss, I's about got everything done now, and me and Chloe is been thinking instid of staying here any longer eating up all your meat, me and her better go up to town and hire out. I done spoke to Mr. Hill 'bout looking after you all till I can git a place, and then maybe it would be the best for you to come up there. I don't see how you are going to stay in the country now."

"Oh, Tom! Tom! It makes no difference where I stay now."

"Yes, m'am; we all feel that way, and looks like there aint nothing worth living for these days. Still we've got to live, Mistiss."

"Do whatever you think best, Tom. We will stay here for the present; that is sufficient."

"Yes, m'am. But, Mistiss, you know Master told me to take care of you all in Texas till he come—he aint never come yit."

"You have done your duty, Tom."

"Thankee, m'am; I want to keep on doing it."

"Uncle Tom, do you think you and Aunt Chloe can get employment?"

"Yes, Missie; we can cook for the hotel, and we thought if you was up there we might help—"

"Thank you, Uncle Tom, I know you would do all you could for us, but we can get through the winter now, and you and Aunt Chloe must take care of yourselves."

Poor Aunt Chloe was sobbing like her heart would break.

"Don't cry, Chloe; if I was able to clothe and feed you you should never leave me."

"We must all bear up," Uncle Tom said solemnly. "I think I can arrange it so as I can support you all; leastways, we can help one another."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CARRINGTONS hibernated through the winter. No one seemed to care to rally. But for the one little life, budding fresh in its springtime, no effort would have been made to live. Pearl tugged at the heartstrings of her mother and aunt, and demanded her share of life.

Mrs. Carrington was broken, and absolutely refused to live. Nothing should interest her here; she would give up all and follow her loved ones!

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe hired out in town. They were both getting old, and were as much broken in spirit as their mistress. But they worked faithfully, hoping to get a little start again by spring, and if "Mistiss" would not come to town, then they would go back to her, and make a crop on the land and hold the houses for her. Uncle Tom was determined not to give up his charge.

Our distinguished characters were still in the capital city, rehearsing nightly for their final tragic appearance before the footlights.

Mrs. Smith was not handsome, but as the business woman of the concern, she still held a most important position.

Pete had failed as a gentleman of fashion; he was far too serious in his intention towards Rose. Mr. Adolph St. Clare smiled upon him, kept Rose, and took 'Liza, too.

Mrs. Smith seemed perfectly contented with the arrangement, and Mr. Beck begun to feel himself one too many. True he was useful in the domestic machinery, "making fires and fetchin' water," but he began to writhe under this, and even 'Liza, as second choice, was beginning to console herself with occasional draughts of lager beer.

Still, as Mr. Adolph knew the "ropes," and could "draw a hand" in more ways than "flushing" the State treasury, he held them together, slaves to his bidding.

If Mrs. Smith could have induced Rose to have smiled once upon poor Pete, the tragedy might have been averted; but with a depleted purse and heart strings trampled upon, he swore vengeance and sought "surcease of sorrow" in the flowing bowl. In his forlornness he was scarcely recognizable, and had at times become so obstreperous Mr. Adolph had threatened to put him out.

In desperation, he sought Topsy, telling her he was tired of her airs now, and he meant business. She knew very well what he brought her up here for; what he had spent all his daddy's money for, and if she didn't begin to work "spells" on Rose, and make Mr. Adolph do the right thing by 'Liza, by the "Holy Moses" he was going to begin to work "spells" himself!

Whisky made him brave, so Pete picked up jobs here and there and kept himself in whisky.

Mrs. Smith began to dread him and tried to make Rose see the importance of still smiling on him, but Rose was too jealous of her place in Adolph's heart.

'Liza grew obese and cared for nothing but her mug of beer, which Rose made sure she got.

And so things went from bad to worse, until one night—but the morning paper told the tale:

"Another mysterious midnight murder! One woman killed; another hacked to pieces! No clue to the brutal outrage!"

Adolph fled; Topsy disappeared; 'Liza, Uncle Tom's "little gal," lay cold and stark; Rose was cut to pieces, her brain oozing out; she was taken to the city hospital unconscious, with no hope of recovery!

Pete lurked around and was finally nabbed and jailed.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe worked at the hotel. Uncle Tom, with his white apron on, was waiting on some drummers, or commercial travelers—those gentlemen who always know the news—and they were discussing the tragedy—the late mysterious murder at Austin—and one read aloud all the horrible details, names and all.

Uncle Tom staggered under his waiter of dishes, and one of gentlemen, seeing his agitation, rose and exclaimed:

"Why! my man, are you sick?"

"Please, master, let me have that paper; I believe them 's my own chil'n."

Uncle Tom tottered into the kitchen where Aunt Chloe stood frying cakes. She had just turned a lot and stood with the knife upraised ready to dish them.

"Why, Tom! My God a' mighty, what ails you?"

"Oh! Chloe, our poor little gal, Chloe!"

"What, honey; what is it?"

"She's dead, Chloe! she's killed! she's murdered!"

"Tom, what you talking 'bout! How do you know?"

Uncle Tom clutched the paper, and began to tell her—but the burning cakes, the neglected guests, brought the landlord to the kitchen.

"What the devil are you standing there letting the cakes burn up for?"

"Oh, master!"

"Don't you master me, you deceitful old rascal; go back to that dining room. And you attend to your cooking there or get out of this kitchen."

Uncle Tom went out of the kitchen like one dazed, and Aunt Chloe followed after him.

The landlord swore, and called for another servant to come to the kitchen.

"You reckon it's so, Tom?"

"Yes; it's all here in this paper; and I haven't told you all, Chloe."

"What else, Tom? For God's sake, what else can there be?"

"Our Pete, Chloe, is the one that killed 'um!"

"Killed 'um! Who?"

"'Liza and Rose; and they got Pete in jail."

"Oh! my God!"

"It's all in this paper, Chloe; all in this paper."

The landlord followed them out, cursing and calling them back to their work, but they were deaf to everything but their own trouble.

"Then, d—n you black free niggers, if you can't obey me you can get other quarters."

Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe stood still in their grief and saw their things pitched out of the servants' room.

Aunt Chloe's nice plump feather bed and pillows had been sacrificed to Mrs. Smith's conjur balls, and now they had nothing but a little cotton mattress and pillows, some old bed clothes, and one little trunk that held their wearing apparel.

Uncle Tom piled them together, then led Aunt Chloe away. They wandered on the outskirts of the town. Black and ignorant as they were, they felt their disgrace so keenly they avoided meeting anyone they knew, and instead of wanting the paper read, Uncle Tom kept it concealed lest the very sight of it should hint at their disgrace.

"That Mrs. Smith's at the bottom of it all, Tom!"

"I 'spect so. I hope Mistiss may never hear of it. Chloe, I never want to see nobody any more."

"God knows what we's all coming to!"

Towards night they rented them a little room in an out-of-the-way place, packed their things there, and sat down to grieve all alone.

As Uncle Tom told his mistiss, "we have to live," so in his greatest sorrow he had to go out and get a little something to eat, wood, oil and water. But the old man dragged heavily and wearily. Like his mistress, he had almost more than he could endure.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON the third morning, instead of getting up, Uncle Tom breathed heavily and a langour crept over him he could not resist.

"Chloe!" he called; "Chloe, I aint able to make the fire this morning; you 'll have to git up and help yourself."

"Why, to be sure, Tom; are you sick?"

"Yes, I 'm sick; I 'm mighty sick, Chloe."

Aunt Chloe sprang up and felt him.

"You 've got a hot fever, old man."

"I 'm mighty sick."

"Hadn't I better go for the doctor?"

"No, no; we aint able to pay no doctor's bill, Chloe. You can nurse me, and do what Mistiss used to do for us."

Aunt Chloe kindled a fire as quickly as she could, put on a kettle of water, and bathed his feet and head, but Uncle Tom got no better. Aunt Chloe was afraid to leave him. She made him a little gruel and some tea, but he could take nothing. He lay in that old outhouse on a thin cotton mattress down on the hard floor. Night came and Aunt Chloe watched by the flicker of a little brass lamp,

thinking when morning came she must try and call someone; she never saw Tom look like that.

Towards midnight someone knocked at the door.

Aunt Chloe got up and opened it, hoping some of the servants from the hotel had come to see about them, but as the figure moved in, Aunt Chloe gave one scream and leaped on the other side of Uncle Tom. Burying her head in the bed clothes, she implored Tom to "Send her away!" Uncle Tom awoke, startled.

"Who, Chloe, who?"

Topsy stood in the middle of the room, as much frightened at Uncle Tom's looks, as Aunt Chloe was of her.

"It is me, Mr. Beck; don't you know me? How long has he been sick?"

But Aunt Chloe only screamed the louder, "Go away from here! You are going to kill us all!"

This startled Topsy, and she hurriedly left the room. She had traced Uncle Tom from Farmingdale to town, to the hotel, and thence to this miserable shanty. She had come to tell him of Pete's arrest, and to make him believe he was in the greatest danger of being hung, thus getting any money the old folks might have, making them believe she was going right back to his rescue. But she saw at a glance there was no money there, and Uncle Tom would soon be dead. She hurried away with all possible speed. She knew Pete was in no danger, for Adolph was in New Orleans by this time, and with her away, there were no witnesses against him. He would be released for want of evidence, and no doubt go West and grow up with the country.

Topsy moved on.

"Chloe, who was that?"

"Oh! Tom, it was that Mrs. Smith!" And Aunt Chloe's teeth began to chatter. "She's a voodoo, Tom!"

"Hush, Chloe!"

"She's a cannibal, like Mas' George told us 'bout, and she killed our chil'n!"

"There! There! Raise my head a little, Chloe. I hope Mistiss will never know——"

Aunt Chloe was startled at the change in his voice.—
“Tom!”

But Uncle Tom had sunk into a stupor. Aunt Chloe worked with him alone till daylight, then seeing it was useless to do anything more, she took her seat near the door to watch for someone passing.

Pretty soon she saw someone coming directly to the house. It was one of the servants from the hotel.

“A lady came by this morning and told us where you were, and said she didn’t think we would find Mr. Beck alive this morning.”

“She knowed! Oh! She knows everything!” poor old Aunt Chloe sobbed.

When it was learned the Hon. Mr. Beck was dead, the town turned out and gave him a decent burial and respectable funeral.

It was some days after that Richard Gordon heard of it and of the terrible tragedy at Austin, and went over to tell the Carringtons. Then, indeed, Uncle Tom was mourned; not as a legislator, but for his own true worth, a tried and faithful servant. It grieved the Carringtons, too, to think of Pete and ‘Liza being led astray and coming to such a disgraceful end. Poor Uncle Tom! His white friends sympathized with him, and could not grieve that death had given him such instant relief. They were now anxious about Aunt Chloe.

Richard Gordon said Mr. Hill expected to go to town very soon with his wagon and he would see her and bring her out if she wished to come.

Mrs. Carrington had lived exposed to the malaria of the Brazos so long her system was now thoroughly impregnated with its poison, and in her relaxed mental condition offered no resistance to its ravages. Drawn with rheumatism and attacked with malarial fever, she suffered untold torture.

Oizelle and Minnie were taxed to their utmost in lifting and nursing her. They had just got her comfortably to bed one night, and given her a narcotic, hoping she would sleep, when they were startled by someone falling heavily on the steps, moaning and groaning.

Oizelle took the lamp and went into the hall, Minnie following her.

"It is Aunt Chloe!" Minnie exclaimed, stooping to lift the old woman up.

"Aunt Chloe, how did you get here?" asked 'Zelle.

"Missie! honey! Missie! did you know Tom was dead?"

"Yes, Aunt Chloe, we know it, and Mr. Hill was going up to see about you. How did you get here?"

"I walked, honey!"

"Why, Aunt Chloe, how could you?"

"I was 'bleeged to, honey; I couldn't stay away from you no longer, and Tom gone, too. She done it, Missie! She killed 'um all; Tom and my chil'n, too."

Oizelle and Minnie got the old woman, footsore and weary, into the room, soothed her and fed her. Mrs. Carrington woke in the excitement; and was so glad to hear it was Aunt Chloe.

"Mistiss, you will let me stay, now Tom's gone, and my chil'n?"

"Yes, Chloe, we will all go soon; you and I! Yes; stay with Oizelle, Chloe, and take care of her when I am gone."

"Yes, Mistiss, but you must stay too."

"No; my time's up, Chloe; I have stayed too long, too long."

Mrs. Carrington dropped off to sleep again. Oizelle fixed a place for Aunt Chloe to rest, told her how sick her mother was, and how glad she was to have her help to nurse her.

"You must quit grieving now, Chloe; the dead are all at rest. We that live suffer, and we must learn to bear it."

Aunt Chloe was stiff and sore for several days, but after that she grew more cheerful under intelligent influence, and was a Godsend to Mrs. Carrington in her affliction. Oizelle and Minnie were deeply grateful for help so timely.

Mrs. Carrington lingered for weeks and weeks, regretting all the while she was such a charge. Why couldn't she go?

At last she was released and laid beside her darling boy; Angy lay at their feet.

The living had to suffer. Oizelle and Minnie looked about them, and found themselves destitute of almost everything.

Mr. Hill and Richard Gordon cultivated the land and held the houses for them to live in. Aunt Chloe now did their little cooking and the rough work generally. She and Pearl planted a garden, milked the cow, fed the pigs and chickens. Aunt Chloe's heart begun to grow warm again for Mas' George's child. Pearl was devoted to Aunt Chloe. They lived in the open air, and both grew strong.

Aunt Chloe lived the old life over, telling Pearl what good times they had in slavery times. She never 'spected to see her family come to this. And Pearl would stand with wide open eyes as Aunt Chloe would depict the splendor and magnificence of their home on the old Mississippi.

Oizelle and Minnie sat in the house plying their needles. In the spring time, when the hoe hands would be paid off, the colored ladies all wanted new spring dresses made, and again in the fall of the year, cotton picking would fill their pockets with small change, and a demand for fall and winter dresses would be in season, so Oizelle and Minnie were kept pretty busy and eked out a scant living in this way.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANOTHER Northern wave swept over the country about this time, and public schools were established everywhere.

Minnie tried to persuade Oizelle to apply for a position to teach, but she was sensitive and strictly conscientious. She knew nothing of normal methods; she hadn't been educated for a teacher, and didn't think she could get a certificate.

"I care for nothing now, Minnie, but quiet and to help you raise Pearl."

"Don't you think you could help me better by taking charge of a school?"

"I don't feel that I 'm competent; rather I doubt my ability to conduct a school. I can teach Pearl my own way, and that is about all."

"I am sure you are no seamstress, my dear sister; and making dresses for negroes is not very fascinating employment."

"Minnie, Mrs. Gordon was telling me of a sewing machine agent in the neighborhood; we can buy a machine on an installment plan; I think we can pay for it. And in those papers Mr. Hill brought me, I saw catalogues of patterns advertised. We can send and get all sizes, thus being saved the trouble of so much fitting, and in this way I think, my dear, we can do very well at this sewing business, and I prefer it, now we have Aunt Chloe with us, to going away from home to teach."

"If you think you can stand the confinement, Oizelle, I know we can get the sewing; it is the only thing I can do, but you are such a scholar it seems a shame for you to do such work."

"It is no more irksome than teaching, and then I will be with you."

Oizelle had become sensitive, shrinking. To be out of the world, away from all observation, alone with her grief, was all she desired. Morning and evening she would go to the little mott of timber, as she would to a cathedral. Seated by her mother's grave, she had subdued all her rebellious feelings, and now waited patiently, doing just what her hands found to do day by day.

The agent came and left them a very good machine, to be paid for in monthly installments. He was a talkative, wide-awake man, and imparted all the news of the county. It fell on inattentive ears, till he commenced to talk of the new comers to Liendo; how the general population seemed to be changing, old citizens moving away.

"Why, now there 's the Kirklands; you have heard of their streak of luck?"

"No," said 'Zelle, interested immediately.

"They have sold their elegant home to the State."

"To the State? What does the State want with Alta Vista?"

"They want it for a colored college."

"A colored college?" It took a long while for the truth to dawn on Oizelle, then she asked timidly, "A negro college; Alta Vista a negro college?"

"Yes; oh, yes; a normal college for the colored people. The State pays the Kirklands twelve thousand dollars for it; fine situation, very fine situation, you know."

"Yes, I know," Oizelle answered absently. She thought she was prepared for anything, but it was a long while before she could realize Alta Vista was to be a negro college.

After the agent was gone, Minnie asked:

"Oizelle, what do you think of the State spending so much money on negro education?"

"I don't know, Minnie; it seems to me if the South would look after her unfortunate, poverty-stricken whites she would have as much as she could do."

"Mr. Hill says the politicians will spend the last dollar in the treasury on negro education now."

"It looks like it when you think of giving them Alta Vista. Nature and wealth have combined to make it one of the loveliest places in the State. How grand it would be for a refuge for poor heart-broken Southern women. Not a July sun beams down on us here in this cabin that I don't think of the delightful South breeze always wafted through the cool, airy halls of Alta Vista. I don't pretend to understand it, Minnie, and I dare not think; this world is a blank to me. I have always done my duty as I have known it, and yet, here I am—drifted, alone."

Mr. Gray had moved in; the old houses at Farmingdale were torn down and moved to different portions of the plantation for tenant houses, and a nice new house built for the Grays. They were good, kind people, and quite an addition to the neighborhood. They had several children, and soon became acquainted with Oizelle and Minnie, and gave them a great deal of sewing to do.

Pearl was a bright, quick child, anything but what her name indicated. She was a ruby, a topaz—bright, dazzling, all energy, nothing sentimental about her. Her hair hung in close chesnut-brown curls to her waist; her eyes large and dark, her complexion a rich olive. Her mother insisted she would have been fair but for Texas wind and sun. But Pearl was not sunburnt or sallow, her complexion was clear and rich. She was full of energy, active, and detested sewing, as long as it had to be done with the fingers. But she was charmed with the machine. She soon pushed her mother from it and took possession. Like her father, she was a natural machinist, and after examining every part carefully, she took charge of it and soon learned to do the most exquisite work. The cut paper patterns, too, pleased her, and soon mother and aunt were simply Miss Pearl's assistants in the dressmaking business. She fitted so perfectly and draped so beautifully, the negroes poured in from every quarter with their dresses.

Oizelle felt humiliated and a shrinking sensitiveness she could not overcome, but it was all business with Pearl—just so many dollars and cents. Aunt Chloe was delighted with the way the child did make the machine fly; and Pearl resolved to make Aunt Chloe a dress in the height of the style—puffs, draperies and all.

To see Pearl becoming a regular dressmaker for a lot of negroes was more than Oizelle could endure. She and Minnie were kept busy finishing off garments, and as she worked buttonholes, she asked Minnie if she didn't think it best to send Pearl to the public school. One conducted by a gentleman was being taught not far from Fern Brook.

"I don't see how we can spare her from the machine; she is such an expert."

"Minnie, it will not do for George's child to remain an expert at sewing for negroes."

"I know, my dear sister, but we have to do it."

"Pearl must be fitted for a teacher and brought in contact with white children. This will never do, Minnie, never do."

"Just as you think, sister; we will try and do without her."

"We will not accomplish so much, but it will be best for Pearl."

Pearl didn't like giving up the machine, in the busy season, too. She thought when there was not so much sewing to be done, she could study at home, under her aunt, as she had always done.

But Oizelle said no; there was a regular course to pass through; it would cost nothing, and she must study and fit herself for a teacher.

Pearl was very intelligent—had read with her aunt more than most girls of her age—but she felt teaching was not her forte.

Her mother told her, if her aunt wished it, she must go to school. She started reluctantly, but in a week or two she was delighted, not so much with the school work as with the girls she met.

Pearl had lived a secluded life, and had never known the enjoyment of social intercourse till now. She never knew really how pretty she was. Her mother was very pretty and her aunt beautiful, but she had thought nothing of being pretty herself. But now she saw ugly girls and pretty girls, though, if the truth must be confessed, none near so pretty as herself. The girls clustered around her in perfect admiration; the boys stood afar off and worshipped at a distance. Even the teacher could not help resting his weary eyes on a face so fresh and pretty. Pearl was never so happy in her life.

One evening she came home radiant.

"Oh! Mamma, do let me go home with the Jenkins girls! They come to school in a 'Rockaway,' and they wait me to stay all night with them."

"I don't know, my daughter, they live several miles out on the prairie; I am not acquainted with them."

"Oh, but they are the nicest girls in school; they dress ever so fine, and come to school in a carriage."

"Pearl, it is out of taste to dress fine at school," her aunt remarked, "and we don't know those people."

Poor Pearl! She knew from her aunt's tone something was wrong, but the disappointment was very great.

"Did you bring your books home to study?"

"I brought my reading, Aunt 'Zelle. I have time to get all my lessons in school."

"It is very important for you to study your lesson thoroughly, Pearl, especially your arithmetic."

"I worked all my examples in school to-day."

"Pearl, you are old enough to understand the importance of applying yourself diligently; you must fit yourself for a teacher. We will always have to work for a living, and school teaching will bring you in contact with refinement; it will give you a literary outlet. You must make the most of advantages given you."

"I do study, Aunt; I always know my lessons."

"Mrs. Gray was here to-day, and told me the Normal College now established at Huntsville would fit you for teaching, while board, tuition and all expenses are free."

"I would like to go to Alta Vista; I wish they hadn't given it to the negroes. Did you know the negroes were going to have a school right out here at the church?"

"No. Who is to teach them?"

"Some highly educated colored lady from the North, I heard some of the girls say."

"I hope you will bring your books home hereafter, Pearl; I want to see you take more interest in your studies."

Oizelle kissed her good-night and retired to her room, where Aunt Chloe sat dozing, waiting for her.

"Mamma, I don't see why Aunt 'Zelle wants me to be a teacher. I can do better at a hundred things than teaching."

"But teaching is refining, and the most genteel way to make a living."

"Oh, deary! I am genteel at anything I do."

"I know you are, my precious child;" and her mother gave her a soothing caress.

"Mamma, may I use the machine a little while to-night? Emily Jenkins told me if I would make her an apron like mine she would give me a lovely piece of rib-

bon," and Pearl unrolled some white material and dainty embroidery.

"My child, you should study at night; you will not be able to make the apron."

"Oh, yes I can, dear mamma; I do want the ribbon so much."

Poor little Mrs. Carrington felt the tears starting to think how little she could give her beautiful child.

Pearl got out her pattern, soon had the apron cut out, and the machine flying.

Aunt Chloe roused up from nodding. "Umph! Do wonder what that blessed child is sewing this time o' night?"

"I can't imagine; there is nothing in the house, not a piece of material."

"I 'specs you all be getting in plenty o' sewing now; the niggers is going to have a school out here to the church."

"Pearl was telling me something of it. Do you know who will teach them?"

"Some fine lady from Galveston, they say. I don't pay no 'tention to them niggers, Missie; with all their airs and dressing, what is they?"

"I wish they were all as good as you, Aunt Chloe."

"Oh, they say I aint nobody."

"What can that child be sewing?" Oizelle did not feel like she could sleep, so went in to see what Pearl was doing. "What have you found to sew, you industrious little sprite?"

Pearl felt a little confused. She never had concealed anything from her aunt, but somehow she was ashamed of what she was doing, but she looked straight up and told all about it.

"Emily Jenkins may require fine dresses, but I am sure my girl is pretty enough without ribbons."

"Oh! Aunty, the girls say I dress so cheap."

"Who said it? Those Jenkins?"

"No, Aunty; Emily put her arms around me and said I didn't need fine dressing, but some of the others said

they didn't reckon we could hardly get bread and meat at our house, much less fine dresses."

"Why, how cruel! What kind of children are they?"

"I don't know. I think the teacher heard them, for I heard him telling them what a fine family ours was. Edgar Lumpkin said that didn't prove anything; bottom rail was on top now."

"Well, Edgar ought to know he is one of the top rails at bottom now himself."

"Edgar don't care, he is a boy; but I don't want them to talk about my dress and my lunch."

"Your luncheon?"

"Yes; all the nice girls bring cake and goodies, and they laugh at my buttered bread."

"My darling, you must be above all that. You must have a purpose for going to school and work to it, then you will be happy and achieve something. Let me help you with the apron."

"No, thank you, Aunt, I can finish it all off with the machine."

Oizelle kissed her niece and went back to her room, but with a heavy heart. She saw new trouble ahead for her brother's child, and feared she would not have strength of character sufficient to meet it.

Aunt Chloe was sleeping comfortably. Oizelle never looked at the old woman without feeling thankful that she was with them; she was such a help, such a protection. They could make a living, as the life they lived was so narrow, so confined, it didn't take much to live. But Pearl; she must be lifted out of this.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE colored school opened. The little darkeys swarmed by, on their way to the church.

The teacher passed, looking very stylish. She affected a quick step, and held her parasol in a screen-like way be-

tween her and the house. Minnie watched her for some distance past the house, and then said to Oizelle :

"Do you know I believe that is Topsy."

"You think so? Oh! I hope not, for Aunt Chloe's sake."

In a few moments Aunt Chloe came in looking troubled.

"Missie, that school teacher aint nobody but that Mrs. Smith. I hoped I wan't never going to see her no more."

"Well, it is a shame public money should fall into such hands as hers. Don't let it trouble you, Aunt Chloe."

"No, honey, but I can't help it; she's going to trouble me to my dying day."

Pearl's troubles continued at school, and her beauty only added fuel to the fire. The girls said the teacher was in love with her; he was accused of partiality, and Emily Jenkins was now her only champion. She was delighted with her apron and gave Pearl a quantity of ribbon for it. When she took it home, her mother told her it was much more than the apron was worth. Pearl thought everything conspired to mortify her.

"Emily says we make everything too cheap. They have that colored girl, Bettie, hired that I made such a beautiful sateen for. Emily says her mother pays five or six dollars for dresses made like that and we only charged her two dollars. Emily says I could make lots of money with my machine in town."

Mrs. Carrington looked troubled, but said nothing. Oizelle could not contain herself.

"Pearl! We are making a living and have Aunt Chloe to help us. You certainly can put aside everything else and concentrate your mind on your books. Emily Jenkins has plenty of money; let her keep it!" Oizelle was about saying something else, but reflected it would not be wise, and so continued: "I hope we will hear less of ribbons and money, and more of your books."

The next day was Saturday, and Pearl was surprised to see the Jenkins carriage drive up to their gate. Emily and her mother came in a little awkwardly and overdressed. Pearl met them and conducted them in, where they were introduced to her mother and aunt, and Mrs.

Jenkins immediately informed them that she had come to get some sewing done.

"I had no idea I could get such cutting and draping done in the country. But really you work at starvation prices. Now, I will give you my sewing, and if you do it to suit me, I will expect to pay you the same I do in town."

Oizelle thanked her. "But, Mrs. Jenkins, we have no house rent to pay; we live much cheaper in the country than they do in town. It would hardly be fair to charge the same."

"Oh! The idea! You are entirely too correct."

"We will be glad to get your sewing, and I assure you we want nothing but what is correct."

Mrs. Jenkins took a good look at Miss Carrington and thought, "Proud! Poor and proud!" But it pleased her to patronize these old fallen aristocrats, so she turned to Mrs. Carrington. "My Emily has taken the greatest fancy to your daughter, and we've come to take her home with us to-day."

Oizelle started. Emily came in with her arms around Pearl.

"Yes, she must go home with us. We will bring her back to-morrow. Oh, Mrs. Carrington, do let her go!"

Pearl was all excitement, and turned to Oizelle: "Do, Auntie! I never rode in a carriage in my life! Oh! I do want to go so much!"

Poor 'Zelle! What could she do? The little mother's sympathies were all with her child, and even Aunt Chloe was so happy to see a fine turnout standing at their gate once more, chimed in with Pearl: "Do let her go, Missie! Let her go!" And so, overpowered by the majority, Auntie had to give way.

Pearl went off radiant.

"There now! She is just where she ought to be. The idea of a Carrington sitting here like poor white folks!"

"I don't think she is just where she ought to be. The idea of a Carrington visiting such people as those!"

"Why, sister, I thought"—

"Minnie, I thought you knew how old man Jenkins made his money."

"Oh, well, that will not affect Pearl! The poor child"—

"I hope it may not affect her."

Minnie proceeded to examine the work that Mrs. Jenkins had left. "I am thankful for her sewing, anyway, for this is rather a dull month."

"I would rather sew for negroes."

"Sister, don't be so bitter."

"I am not bitter, Minnie. You don't understand me. I want nothing to do with people devoid of right principles. Negroes are not accountable, but I do expect something better of white people."

Pearl returned delighted with her visit. She had never seen so much elegance—carpets, mirrors, servants. And they had all been so good to her! She started off to school next morning with renewed energy.

In fact, her description of her visit; her delightful ride across the prairie; her exuberant spirits, inspired them all. Oizelle and Minnie took an early start at their sewing, determined to get in a good day's work. Aunt Chloe brushed and cleaned, and put some yeast to rise; it did finely, and she was so happy to think what beautiful rolls she would have for the child's supper when she came home from school. The whole day was a success. Oizelle said it seemed to her they had accomplished more with the machine that day than they ever had without Pearl. Aunt Chloe said she never did make such bread, and the rolls were going to be too good to eat.

The old lady bustled about and put everything in order; the table was neatly set, waiting for Pearl. She was a little later than usual, but she came bounding in, praising Aunt Chloe for cleaning the yard, and having a hundred things to tell her mamma and aunty.

Aunt Chloe hurried them to put away their work and come to supper; the rolls were perfect.

Before they could get to the table, Aunt Chloe spied the cow and calf getting together, and called to "Missie" to take the bread out of the oven, she would go and milk the cow.

Pearl watched Aunt Chloe, saw the calf was a little hard to manage, and ran out to assist, but just as she got to her, Aunt Chloe gave a hard pull at the rope, trying to tie the calf, but dropped back with a groan on the ground. Pearl was so startled she couldn't scream and tugged away at Aunt Chloe, trying to raise her up.

Oizelle and Minnie grew curious at Pearl's delay and looked out to see what was the matter. Seeing Aunt Chloe on the ground, they ran out, but the old lady never moved; she had died of rupture of the heart. Pearl was frightened almost to death, but ran quickly across the field to call Richard Gordon and Mr. Hill.

Poor Oizelle! She felt as if the last link was broken. How could they live without Aunt Chloe? Dear, faithful old woman. The bread was the best she ever made. No one could eat it. How it would have hurt her to know the rolls were not touched while they were fresh and hot.

Mrs. Gordon came over, and white hands dressed and laid Aunt Chloe away. Oizelle said none other should touch her, she was a "white folks' nigger" and remained so till her dying day.

She was buried by the side of Angy, at the feet of her dear old "mistiss."

CHAPTER XXVII.

IT was some days before Pearl recovered from the shock of Aunt Chloe's death. The burthen of their domestic duties weighed heavy upon Oizelle and Minnie, but Oizelle insisted upon Pearl continuing school; she must prepare herself for a normal course at a sacrifice of everything else.

Pearl returned to her studies, much troubled at her mother and aunt having so much to do. She would milk the cow and do all she could before and after school to lighten the work, but she was not satisfied, and in trying to do both succeeded in doing nothing very well but keep-

ing her own mind in a troubled state, not very conducive to study.

Oizelle and Minnie struggled to keep the work up at both ends, troubling Pearl as little as possible, at the same time urging her forward with her books, and all might have succeeded if nerves and constitutions had been made of iron.

It was soon evident that Minnie was giving way. Conceal it as she would, every movement was an effort and ended in a long spell of fever. Pearl was compelled to quit school, and she and her aunt nursed and worked, but in spite of every effort their funds ran low. Old family relics had to be taken from their hiding places, pawned—sacrificed to the present emergency. After weeks and weeks, Minnie began to grow better, but was never strong, never the same again.

Pearl had to take her place and work for her. She proved perfectly efficient at the sewing machine. So Oizelle had to reconcile it, and be thankful that the child was such a genius at cutting and fitting, and tried to do her part cooking and cleaning.

Emily Jenkins was a staunch friend of Pearl, brought her all the sewing she could, and paid her well for it. Pearl was quick and energetic, free of all sensitiveness, and cared for nothing only to make money to add to her mother's comfort. If she failed to have a job of sewing in the house she would work at something else. Mrs. Jenkins and Emily found her taste and judgment so valuable, they would come for her to go to town with them to select articles for them, and on those trips she would buy remnants here and there, and at odd times make them up into fancy aprons, bonnets, book satchels, etc., and display them where the colored school children would be attracted by them. She soon established quite a bazaar, and laughed and grew happy in her success. The mother smiled, and was pleased at the ingenuity of her darling child, but Oizelle had rather starved right there than live at such a sacrifice.

Her brother's child a shop girl, a trader and trafficker with negroes for a living! It was torture; it was the rack.

No one knew this, least of all Pearl. The dear child was doing all she could do, but the aunt grew thinner, paler, more absorbed. The more delicacies Pearl was enabled to add to their scanty fare the less Oizelle could relish them. It was all so crushing, so humiliating. If she could have seen any way out of it. She and Minnie could wait for death, but Pearl! What would become of Pearl?

In the meantime Pearl had to go any day to the Jenkins' to drape, to fit—dress! dress! It seemed to Oizelle she heard of nothing but dress. All for the body, nothing for the mind.

Pearl was developing under it into quite an independent young lady of the period.

Coming home from Mr. Jenkins' one evening, Oizelle looked out and saw besides Emily in the carriage, a gentleman assisting Pearl out. He was dressed in the height of the fashion and was assuming all the airs and courtesies of a regular beau, as he escorted Pearl to the door, leaving Emily seated in the carriage. He lingered long over bidding her good-bye, though declined coming in.

As they drove off Pearl ran in to her mother and aunt, caressing them, and seeming unusually happy.

"Who brought you home, my daughter? I thought I heard a gentleman's voice," asked the invalid mother.

"Yes, Mamma, Emily's brother; he returned from New York, bringing such an elegant stock of goods for the store, and oh, such beautiful things for Emily and her mother. Mrs. Jenkins wanted me to accept a handsome dress pattern from him, but I didn't think it right, at least without consulting you."

"No, no; it would hardly be right, my daughter."

"Of course not, Pearl; I hope you could answer that without consulting anyone."

"They are so kind, Aunt; I would dislike to hurt their feelings. They don't seem to look at things as we do."

"That would hardly be possible, but you certainly know what is proper."

Oizelle's tone and manner cast a damper over Pearl's

exuberant spirits, and she avoided any more comments on Emily's brother in the presence of her aunt, but after her aunt returned to her own room she poured the pleasures of her visit into her doting mamma's ear, exclaiming every now and then, "Oh, mamma! I do wish you could go there; they have everything in such profusion. I did think they were a little coarse at first, but I suppose it is their way, they are so kind to me; and Emily's brother is quite an elegant gentleman; he has been traveling, away from home a great deal, but he has now returned to stay and take charge of his father's business, and they are so happy."

Poor little Mrs. Carrington! She could only listen; she didn't have it in her heart to say a word to cloud the little happiness that seemed to come to her child.

Pearl was now in more demand by the Jenkins than ever. So many new things to be made up, she must come by the week; they would pay her the same. Oizelle objected, she must bring the sewing home, but Mrs. Jenkins said "Really, she didn't see how Pearl could manage so much silk and velvet in such a cramped little house; bare floors, too. She would be sure to get it soiled. No, no, she would pay her more to come to the house." Without more ado, Pearl had to go.

Oizelle felt a presentiment of coming evil, and could not resist talking to Minnie, though it evidently excited her.

"I do think we could live on less and keep Pearl at home; it is contaminating for her to associate with those people."

Poor weak little Minnie! She sighed and wished Oizelle would give up all those old fashion notions. "What could hurt Pearl; she was so pure and so independent."

Oizelle saw a great deal to hurt Pearl; she didn't like the appearance of things. She determined to talk to Pearl and manage things a little herself.

Minnie was hardly capable of feeling as she did, so when Pearl returned from Mrs. Jenkins' this time it must be the last.

When Pearl did return, it was in such a manner as to confirm her aunt in her resolve to put a stop to it. This time Emily's brother brought her home in a buggy alone; his sister didn't find it convenient to come. He drove a pair of splendid horses, and Pearl evidently enjoyed the ride.

Oizelle was shocked beyond expression, but saw it would not do to provoke opposition. She made no unfavorable comment—guarded herself against speaking of Mr. Jenkins at all—but convinced Pearl it would not do for her to leave her mother and aunt alone again; her mother was very helpless and Oizelle not strong. It was impossible for them to be left alone again.

Pearl felt very badly about it; assured her aunt she shouldn't have thought of leaving home only it paid so well; they were compelled to have the Jenkins' sewing. "In fact, Aunt, I don't see how we can live without it."

"Cotton picking season will soon be upon us, my dear, and I was thinking if we had a good many ready-made things on hand they would meet with quick sales."

"That is a good idea, Aunt; really you are getting to be as business as your little niece."

"Anything to keep you with us, my child; it so lonely without you."

"I will not leave you again, dear Aunt; I thought of how hard it must be on you."

Pearl busied herself arranging everything and thinking of many, many things, she could make out of material on hand, and soon had the machine whirling.

Oizelle smiled at the deception she was using on the little witch, and exerted herself to help in every conceivable way, making it as pleasant for Pearl as possible.

Emily Jenkins and her mother came in a few days for Pearl, but she was so engrossed in her bazaar articles she was not inclined to go with them, and told Mrs. Jenkins positively she could not leave her mother again; she could do the sewing at home just as well. Mrs. Jenkins was vexed at not being able to have things just as she wished, and Oizelle heard Emily whisper to Pearl her brother would be perfectly heartbroken, and saw Pearl turn crimson.

After they were gone, Pearl regretted offending Mrs. Jenkins.

"I see no cause of offense; if it is work she wants done, we can do it as well here. If it is not work," and Oizelle gave Pearl a searching look, "remember, Pearl, those people are not your equal. Money is all with them. Can't you discern the difference between Richard Gordon and—those people? There is no comparison. Poverty and coarse clothes can no more conceal gentility and refinement than fine clothes and money can coarseness."

Pearl worked away diligently, making no reply. Soon she had quite an assortment of articles ready for sale and made an artistic display of them at one of the windows. They attracted the little negroes every evening returning from school. Her mother was annoyed at their idle curiosity, as she thought, and asked Pearl what was the use in being worried when she knew they had no money.

"It is an advertising scheme, mamma, dear; I don't sell to them on a credit, but they will tell all the other negroes, and when they get money they will come and buy. But if it annoys you I will take them in."

"No, no; anything to keep you at home."

Minnie was getting childish about Pearl, and agreed with Oizelle about the necessity of her staying at home, but with a different motive.

That evening as the colored teacher and one of her young lady pupils were returning from school they were attracted by the ruffled, puffed and high trimmed articles.

Topsy had never been in, and had been given to understand her trade was not solicited, so she sent the young lady in to inquire the prices, and called after her, "take what you want on credit."

Pearl knew the girl; she had always been polite, but had fallen under the evil eye of Mrs. Smith.

It was late, and Pearl not much inclined to show things. She observed the girl was a little pert, and followed her to the window where the girl reached one of the ruffled bonnets, and was about putting it on her head when Pearl took it from her, saying:

"It is late, Ida, and you have no money; when you are ready to buy I will show you the things."

"How do you know I haint got no money. You's awful sot up 'bout money since you's got to going with them Jenkinses. I shall have the bonnet," and she snatched it from Pearl's hand. Pearl instantly snatched it again, saying:

"Leave the room, you impudent negro."

"Who you call nigger?" and the colored miss gave Pearl a ringing slap on the cheek, and disappeared out of the door.

Pearl sank in a chair, mortified and confused.

Her aunt came in, and seeing finger prints on her cheek, clasped her in her arms, crying,

"My God! How did it happen?"

Pearl was trying to tell all about it, but sobs of pain and mortification choked her, and in the midst of it young Jenkins rode up and came in. When he learned the true state of the case he was perfectly violent in his wrath. Pearl tried to quiet him, saying she saw the mood the girl was in when she entered the house and she should have humored her rather than opposed, and tried to take all the blame on herself, but Jenkins would hear nothing of it.

"You ladies are doing very wrong to stay here by yourselves. Do let me take you home with me!"

Oizelle thanked him; they were not afraid, and if they were, Richard Gordon would come to their rescue. She was determined not to leave him alone with Pearl, and as Minnie's sobs and distress now called for attention, Pearl had to go to her mamma.

Mr. Jenkins saw there was no opportunity for a private conference with Pearl, so left, expressing his deepest sympathy.

Oizelle saw he was very much enraged and called after him, "Mr. Jenkins, please say nothing about this; it will be best to keep it as quiet as possible." But Mr. Jenkins made no reply.

Towards night, Pearl continued so nervous and all felt so badly, Oizelle walked across the field and called Rich-

ard Gordon, telling him they were all a little excited and wanted him to come spend the night with them.

Pearl had always loved Richard like a brother, and none but Oizelle had ever detected any other feeling on the part of Richard. For some time, he had been keeping away from Pearl, trying to school himself to believe he was too poor to ever think of marrying; yet Pearl was young, maybe some day —. He had no idea what had occurred to excite the Carringtons.

He had a white boy working with him now and explained to his mother that William could take his place at home that night as he had to spend the night with the Carringtons.

The mother had guessed the secret of her boy, and smoothed his collar as he went out, remarking:

"It was something unusual for the Carringtons to be uneasy, but I suppose you don't object to spending the night; you always loved Miss 'Zelle, and Pearl gets prettier every day."

Richard blushed like a girl, but kissed his mother good-night and ran on over.

The moment he entered he knew something unusual was the matter—he had never seen Pearl look so badly. When he learned what had happened, and remarked the finger prints on Pearl's cheek, Richard turned pale. Minnie's wailings and complainings served to aggravate his feelings more. Oizelle and Pearl saw they must treat it lightly, but Richard weighed every word as he questioned them to learn the particulars.

"What girl did you say it was?"

"Ida; her mother was one of the Harlan negroes, and was always good and kind to us and Aunt Chloe."

"Someone made her do it," Richard said with compressed lips.

"I can not think what possessed her."

"Well, Aunt, since I can now think, do you know I don't blame Ida so much. As poor Aunt Chloe used to say, I believe that Mrs. Smith is at the bottom of the whole of it."

"Something must have taken possession of her."

"Mrs. Smith conjured her, I reckon, as she did poor Pete and 'Liza. You remember, Aunt, Topsy sent Ida once to know if I would make her a dress, and we sent her word 'no; we never wanted to hear of her again.' Dear old Aunt Chloe was so much afraid of her."

"Well she might be, if she could make Ida do such a thing as she did this evening."

Richard sat very quietly, never expressing an opinion, but trying to amuse Pearl and cause her to forget her troubles.

Oizelle was very proud of Richard and tried to impress Pearl with all his fine qualities.

"Richard, your mother told me you were reading medicine now?"

"Yes; I have my father's books. I am reading, Miss 'Zelle, with very little hope of ever being able to attend lectures."

"It is a shame Texas does not establish her Medical Branch of the University; but I suppose they have so many negro schools to foster, that poor white boys will have to dig and hoe."

Early next morning, while they were at breakfast, Mr. Hill came in. "Good morning, Miss Carrington. Is it possible you have been in trouble here and never called on me?"

"Good morning, Mr. Hill. Our trouble was so unexpected, and so quickly over, it was not necessary to call you. Richard spent the night with us, more on account of our nerves than any expected danger."

"I am glad to see you so cheerful. It was certainly a great outrage, but will not be repeated, I imagine."

"What has happened, Mr. Hill? I do hope nothing serious has been done!"

"Nothing but what should have been done. Some masked men took Ida out last night, but she told such a straight tale about her school teacher's putting her up to it, they spared Ida and put the bulk of the punishment on Mrs. Smith."

Richard sat with his lips compressed, and Pearl looked as if she was going to faint.

Oizelle sighed. "I am very sorry it all occurred."

"Sorry!" And Mr. Hill now for the first time caught a glimpse of Pearl's bruised cheek. "If the young men had seen what I now see, that nigger would have been hung instead of whipped."

"I wish I had been with them," hissed Richard between his clinched teeth.

"Why, I never heard of such an outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Hill, growing excited.

"Hush, Mr. Hill, hush!" sobbed Pearl, "it is all so horrible!"

"Who do you suppose punished the negroes?" inquired Minnie.

"Well, that's hard to tell. Old Jim told me all I know about it. He was feeding the horses this morning early, when I went out to the lot, and he asked me if I had heard of any excitement up here, then told me Ida had slapped Miss Pearl, and he said the boys from the prairie out about Jenkins' store came masked and took Ida out, but her mother followed them, and begged her to tell the young men all about Mrs. Smith. It seems the negroes are in holy terror of Mrs. Smith; but they are rid of her now. Old Jim says when the boys got through with her they told her to skip; if she pretended to teach school here another day they would roast her alive. Jim says he helped her off on the early morning train, and she was about as badly 'skeered' as he was when the kuklux got after him.

"You know, I always thought that old Jim *had* to come to Texas. He told me all about it this morning, and in spite of Miss Pearl's trouble, I don't know when I have laughed so much. He says he was in Mississippi. One night he was hungry for chicken, and he thought he would go where some roosted low, and help himself; says he got two fine, plump pullets, buttoned them up under his coat, and was walking on back, innocent like, in the moonlight, when, it seemed to him, a whole army filed right out in front of him. The captain looked like a giant; he got off his horse, and just as he thought he was going to speak to him, Jim says, he deliberately took off

his head and handed it to him, saying, 'Here, my friend, hold my head while I straighten my back!'" Jim says he began to shake, and as he fell on his knees his chickens got away; but he prayed so manfully, they told him to get up and 'go west.' Jim says he never stopped till he put the Mississippi River between him and those things. He don't think Texas will ever know Topsy again. She has gone North, where, they say, she came from."

"I hope so. She certainly wrought enough trouble while she was here. Poor Aunt Chloe feared her to the last."

"I don't know what will become us," sobbed Pearl. "This will ruin us. The negroes will be afraid to give me any more work, and how are we to live?"

"They will soon get over this, Miss Pearl. In fact, I think the negroes are glad Mrs. Smith was run off, and they think Ida got just what she deserved. You are a great favorite with the negroes, as well as the boys on the prairie."

Oizelle winced under this, and Richard looked like he had grown ten years older. Offering his services to them any moment, night or day, he bade them good morning and went to his work.

During the day, the neighbors, hearing of it, would drop in to know the particulars and offer sympathy.

The excitement was too intense for Pearl; she lost all control of herself, wept, and seemed to grow weaker than her own little mamma.

Towards evening, Emily and her mother arrived, declaring it was the greatest outrage. Impossible for the dear child to try to stay at home, under the circumstances. They had come purposely for her and would take no denial; she must go home with them. The change would settle her nerves quicker than anything else.

Oizelle would have interposed, but Pearl clung to Emily, and seemed to find protection in no one else. She seemed anxious to go, and Oizelle saw no help for it, though after they were gone, she said of the two evils she thought the association with the Jenkins was the worst.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OIZELLE seemed to realize the control of things was slipping from her. Circumstances over which she had no control were about to engulf them. Minnie was a physical wreck, and she leaned entirely on Pearl. Oizelle was troubled, greatly troubled, but what could she do?

Richard came again to spend the night with them, and when he learned Pearl had gone and where, Oizelle saw he had the same instinctive dread she herself had.

For the first time, he complained of his poverty, his unfortunate position in life, and Oizelle was too much in the same mood to offer one word of encouragement.

Mrs. Gray had called in the morning and told Oizelle she and Mr. Gray were very anxious to have a private teacher for their children. They had an office in their yard, and with a little addition it could be made very comfortable for her and Mrs. Carrington and Pearl. If she would teach the children, Pearl could get sewing from the white families around, and they would be more protected in Mr. Gray's yard.

Richard thought it would be the very best thing they could do, and Oizelle decided to accept the position.

After several days, Pearl returned. She looked troubled, irresolute. She avoided her aunt, and hovered around her little mother, more anxious than usual about her physical condition, her extreme weakness.

"Mamma, do you know if I had money you could be cured, could be strong again?"

"Yes, my child, but I am doing very well, and we can live on so little; you must not worry—all will be right again."

"Mrs. Jenkins thinks it is very wrong for us to live here alone; says it was not so bad when I was small, but now—Oh! Mamma," and Pearl hid her face on her mother's shoulder, "If I could, I mean if I would, we could have such an elegant home, and be out of all this trouble."

"If you would; how, my child?"

The confidence was interrupted by Oizelle entering the room to tell Pearl of Mrs. Gray's offer and her determination to accept the place, thinking it would be more protective and better for her. Pearl was silent.

"Don't you like the plan, my dear? What do you think of it?"

"I don't know, Aunt; I can't tell what is for the best, I feel so incompetent to do my duty."

"Yes, I know, but you must not lose control of yourself, the change will do us all good."

Oizelle went out, thinking of the move, and that it must be done as quickly as possible. She heard buggy wheels, and looking out of the window saw young Jenkins, dressed most elegantly, driving his finest team. He sat waiting at the gate, and in a few moments she saw Pearl walk out with her hat on, get in the buggy and drive off.

Oizelle stood confounded. As soon as she could collect her senses she went into Minnie's room and asked where Pearl had gone.

"Only for a little drive, dear sister; don't scold. Oh! the poor child! I don't know what is to become of us!" wailed the poor little woman.

"God will take care of us if we don't desert ourselves. Minnie, it is very unfortunate that you are so weak. Pearl must bear up better under this affliction."

"Don't scold her, please."

Oizelle went out of the room; the whole house was stifling. She too must get into the fresh air. And before she knew it she was standing over her brother's grave, wringing her hands, crying, "George, George! What must I do? Oh, my brother! If I could, I would save your child!" She walked here and there trying to compose herself, and reached the house just as Pearl was returning. They entered the hall at the same moment, and confronted each other.

Both stood still and quiet. Oizelle was white as a ghost, and stood like a dethroned queen.

"Well?"

"I expect to marry Mr. Jenkins, Aunt."

"Marry him! Pearl Carrington! Have you forgotten who you are?"

Pearl was silent.

"Do you know who he is? Do you know they made their money stealing cattle, cheating negroes and selling whisky?"

"I am going to marry him!"

"You are not!"

"Aunty, I have to. Think how much I can do for you and my poor little mother."

"At such a sacrifice? No!"

"I have to marry for protection; we can't live this way."

"Then marry Richard Gordon; he is your equal."

"Yes, equal in poverty. Richard is like I am, birthed with more than he has strength to support. No! I am going to marry Mr. Jenkins." And Pearl passed into her room and threw her arms around her mother.

Oizelle went to her own room and closed the door.

No sleep came to that distracted household that night. Oizelle lay still and wide awake all night long. Struggle as she would, she was about to cry out against this cruel fate that held her incapable of averting this disgrace to her family. Through all her trouble this was the first time their family escutcheon had been assailed. Her brother's child, the blood of the Carringtons to mingle with the dishonorable. "Oh, Lord! Let this cup pass from me!"

At early dawn she rose and went into the kitchen, but Pearl was there before her, with swollen eyes and heavy, sleepless lids. They prepared the morning meal in silence.

After breakfast Oizelle appealed to Pearl once more, but she assured her it was useless, the minister and all would be there at 10 o'clock.

"Then I will leave the house."

"Oh! Aunty, please, please!"

But Oizelle walked to her room, finished packing and left, saying Mr. Gray would send for her things.

Mrs. Gray received her with open arms; she was so

sorry she exerted herself to walk. If she had known it, she would have sent for her.

Oizelle told of her trouble, and only begged to be quiet and put to work as soon as Mrs. Gray could do it.

Pearl exerted great self-control for the sake of her mother. She assured her "Aunty would get over it, and they would all yet live together in a nice, new house; Mr. Jenkins was having one built on the prairie. She knew she was doing for the best, and she would be happy."

She busied herself packing their few little things, dressing herself and her mother, and thought she had things looking very neat as she seated herself to await the hour.

The Jenkins came in full force—Emily in the buggy with her brother, driving his fine span; Mrs. Jenkins in the carriage with the minister, negro driver and maid; old man Jenkins and the boys on horseback, making quite a lively set of outriders.

Emily sprang out of the buggy and ran into the house. "I am so glad to see you. Oh! you demure little thing. Now, you really think you are ready to be married?" And Emily laughed and threw her arms around Pearl, and whispered:

"Where is your aunt?"

Pearl's eyes filled with tears as she told of her aunty's going away.

"I am so glad! Really, now Pearl, excuse me, but I do think it is the very best thing she could have done; and now we will have it all our own way. Such a surprise as we've got for you. Come right in, mother, Miss Carrington is not here."

"What? Well, now really, I breathe easy. You mustn't take offense at what I say, Pearl, but that aunt of yours always did make me feel like I was nobody."

"And if she was here, I know she would oppose this idea of ours, but brother wants you to look just a lovely bride. Bring in the boxes, Bettie. There; now run and tell brother he can do just as he pleases, old Miss Carrington is not here. Yes, just a lovely bride," and Emily opened

one box after another, displaying a full bridal costume, just imported.

Pearl shrunk back. "Oh! Emily, I think it will be so out of place."

"No, no! The contrast; that is what is going to make it so grand. Just to think of picking you up out of this shanty and sitting you down in an elegant home, dressed in silks and velvets, for you know we have the whole trousseau waiting for you. There, hurry up! You look uglier than I ever saw you; I do believe you have been crying. This will never do; brother marrying you for your beauty, too; and you as pale as a ghost. Well, I brought some rouge for my own benefit; I never dreamed you would need it."

Emily, with Bettie's assistance, soon had Pearl attired in full bridal array—white satin, en train, diamonds and orange blossoms.

Emily directed her mother to take her brother and the minister in the opposite room and enter the hall from there. She and Mrs. Carrington would bring Pearl in. They met in the hall, and old man Jenkins supported poor little Mrs. Carrington while she gave her daughter away.

Young Jenkins was loud and highly delighted with the bridal effect.

Pearl felt a sickening sensation, and was hardly conscious of what was passing. She saw her mother placed in the carriage and then felt her husband's strong arms lift her into the buggy, and they were whirled away to their new home—to the "New South."

CHAPTER XXIX.

VERNON TERRILL had succeeded in California. He was a fine lawyer and had made a reputation and a fortune.

When he saw the newspaper accounts of George Carrington's murder, he wrote a letter of condolence to the family, but as we know, Mrs. Carrington was too sick to reply, and Oizelle had no heart to write. In fact she did not want him to know how very poor and utterly miserable they were.

He had never loved any other woman. Oizelle Carrington was still his ideal. He often thought of her, wondering how the death of St. Clare had affected her.

Business now took him to New Orleans, and he passed through Texas en route. Reaching Houston he could not resist an impulse to run up the road and make inquiry of the Carringtons. What could have become of them after George's death?

Vernon had been so prosperous, and in such a different element, he couldn't realize the troubles the Carringtons had been subject to. No one could but those who had endured them. He rather hugged his own disappointment, and felt a little resentful at being able to attain everything in life except the only woman he loved.

He habituated himself to think of her as being absorbed in her own love for St. Clare, and somehow never associated her with any other trouble. He was the injured one, and he deliberated some time whether he should expose himself once more to the temptation and the mortification of feeling how little he was to her, while she was all to him.

The more he thought of it, the more sensitive he became, and finally concluded to go on to New Orleans and look up the Carringtons on his return.

Oizelle was given a comfortable room at Mrs. Gray's, and she began teaching the children.

Society talked of the splendid match the poor sewing

girl had made, and how magnanimous Mr. Jenkins was to place the invalid mother under the finest surgical treatment.

All condemned Miss Carrington for being entirely too correct in her ideas.

Richard Gordon alone appreciated Oizelle's feelings; he went to see her and they consoled each other, and she was of great benefit to him in his studies, for Oizelle was a ripe scholar, and in the midst of her greatest troubles found refuge in her books.

Mr. Gray was delighted with her as a teacher and the children devoted to her. She was a beautiful woman; sorrow had refined and chiseled her into something divine. Shut out from the world, for which she was so superbly fitted, she lived in a world of thought. Mind and intellect held her far above the petty annoyances of every day life, and now she was simply waiting.

As she waited, she grew thin and pale. Struggle as she would to endure and work, she felt she was almost overcome. She had so little to work for now, only self. It was all so useless.

It was Saturday; a rest from school duties. She was in her room alone; no letter to write, none to receive. She sat in holy commune with the past—trying to follow St. Clare in all his wanderings after leaving her; thinking of him coming home to die, and no one to receive him—home, friends, all gone.

A knock at her door recalled her. Opening it, one of the children handed her a card, saying a gentleman wished to see her in the parlor.

It was so unexpected, sounded so much like the long ago, Oizelle looked amazed and wondered if she was dreaming in reality. A look at the card seemed still to confirm the dream idea, and she said to the child, who stood looking at her:

"Aren't you mistaken, my dear; is there a gentleman in the parlor who wishes to see me?"

"Oh! yes; a fine gentleman. No one knows him; he came on the train."

Oizelle looked at the card again.

"Vernon Terrill."

"Can it be possible he is here?" Then she glanced at her dress, then walked to the mirror and looked at herself. "He will never know me; I wish he hadn't come."

She went in with the card in her hand. Vernon was impatiently turning the leaves of an album when she entered. They gazed at each other; Oizelle gave him her hand:

"I suppose this can be no mistake; you are Mr. Terrill?"

"I am; and you, Miss Carrington, Oizelle Carrington?"

Oizelle smiled.

"Be seated; we may come to recognize each other better after a little while."

"Then you were not prepared for gray hairs?"

"No; I have had you associated with youth, and never thought of your growing old."

"And yet we have grown old, you and I." And Vernon walked quickly across the room, then turned and seated himself by her.

"My dear friend, what troubles you must have passed through to have wrought such a change."

Oizelle's sweet, sensitive mouth quivered as she told him of her mother's death, of her brother, and then how she struggled to educate Pearl and lift her up, and how at last all her hopes had been blasted.

"Why haven't you written for me, and called for aid in all your suffering?"

"No one could aid us, Mr. Terrill; it seemed we were just in the coils of an anaconda, and to be crushed was our fate. It is all over now, and I have nothing to do but submit."

Oizelle smiled such a heavenly smile of resignation, Vernon felt she was scarce of this earth.

He talked to her of California, his success in law, something practical, trying to convince himself of the reality.

Mr. and Mrs. Gray came in, so pleased that an old friend had come to visit Miss Carrington. They insisted on his staying some time with them. He was such an

elegant gentleman, talked so fluently, it was good to have him in the house.

Vernon accepted their invitation and remained. He wanted to see the Gordons and he must see George's child, though she had married beneath herself, as Oizelle assured him she had.

The next day was Sunday, and Oizelle proposed going with him to see the Gordons. She told him what an ambitious boy Richard was, and how disappointed he had been about Pearl. Poor boy! She was afraid he was suffering even more than he would acknowledge. She got Mr. Terrill very much interested in Richard.

They all spent the day talking over old times and old friends, and it was strange how they avoided talking over their troubles. Though Mr. Terrill was shocked at their abject poverty and the evidence of hard work in the ladies, they all shunned any allusion to it.

Mr. Terrill told them of California, and fired Richard with a desire to go there.

Mrs. Gordon was particularly anxious to go on Richard's account.

Mr. Terrill assured them nothing would give him more pleasure than to take them back with him; he knew Richard would succeed there, and it should be his business to help him succeed.

It was fully decided the Gordons should return with him to California.

Late in the afternoon Vernon and Oizelle walked back to Farmingdale, taking in the old log house, but avoiding the graves. Again they found an old moss-covered log and seated themselves as of old.

They had begun to grow accustomed to the change in each other, and now and then would catch an expression, a smile, something about the eyes or the mouth, that would remind them of each other, but it was all very tantalizing.

Vernon could scarcely analyze his feelings toward this changed, though still beautiful woman. She seemed so far removed from him; so exquisitely refined and sensitive. He looked at her for some minutes in silence.

It didn't embarrass her. She had always loved him like some relative, and now she asked in such a natural tone of voice,

"You have been prosperous, why have you never married?"

"Because." He tried to answer in the same tone.

"Because, you are the only woman I ever loved."

"Mr. Terrill!"

"I know you never knew it; you have always been so absorbed in your own love you could never see any other."

"Strange! I thought you knew I loved St. Clare."

"So I did. That did not prevent my loving you."

"It should have done so. I was as much his as if the bans had been pronounced, and you should not—"

"Well, I did not; though after knowing you I could never make up my mind to marry anyone else. It has been a long time; I have known women who lose their husbands, marry again—"

"Mr. Terrill, you don't understand!"

"I know I don't; but it seems to me a lifetime devotion should be repaid, Oizelle."

"No! No! You have no right!"

"Give me the right to take care of you; you are all alone now, and I—"

"No! No! I have endured so long, and now it is such a little way. Oh, Mr. Terrill, you don't believe this world is all, do you? I mean for me! I could have been so happy in this world with St. Clare! With no one else! You are mistaken; I am not the only woman you could have loved. No! No! I am all St. Clare's! I am attuned to no other soul but his."

"And what will become of you when the Gordons go away with me and you are left here alone?"

"I will not be left alone. No! No! I have been cheated out of this world; I must hold fast the next. Take Richard to California and make the Gordons comfortable. I will not be clogged with mortality much longer; soon I will be released; until then I can take care of myself, and then—Oh! Mr. Terrill; I will be so happy!"

Vernon gazed at her in perfect awe. She looked ethereal, and he would not have been surprised to see her translated bodily.

He rose in perfect silence and led the way to the house.

Monday morning Oizelle went to her school duties and Mr. Terrill drove on the prairie with Mr. Gray.

They called at the Jenkins'. Emily met them, but informed them her brother had taken his wife and her mother to New York. They expected to leave Mrs. Minnie Carrington in Maryland with her family, while Pearl and her husband visited the different Northern cities. They would return by Chicago and purchase furniture for their elegant modern residence then near completion.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins came in and laughed at the idea of Pearl's aunt objecting to their son for a nephew; it was perfect nonsense; she could come here and live in comfort and ease the rest of her life.

Vernon took mental observation of the family and their magnificent surroundings, and agreed with Oizelle, "George Carrington's daughter had married beneath herself."

He returned determined to try to persuade Oizelle to go with him to California; he could not leave her. She had become so interested in getting the Gordons off, so pleased to think Richard would yet be lifted up and get his profession, she was cheerful and even happy.

They left several days in advance of Mr. Terrill. He remained, hoping, after their departure, Oizelle would realize how lonely she would be and then give him the right to take her away. But no, nothing he could offer or suggest could change her. She must stay and teach right there.

CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER pleading in vain, Vernon Terrill saw nothing to do but return alone to California.

With a sorrowful heart, he sought Mr. Gray and asked him to take special care of Oizelle.

"It seems to me she is totally unfitted for such duties. Mr. Gray, if you could prevail on her just to remain in your family as a member of it I will pay her board."

"Why, my dear sir, I am perfectly willing, but you don't know her, if you think she would remain a day unless she thought she was earning her own living."

"Yes, yes, I know. Oh! if she would only go with me. Mr. Gray, I will have to leave; please be a kind friend to her, and if anything happens, should she ever need me, telegraph me; here is my address."

Handing him a card, he shook hands with him, and left all hope behind. Back to the grinding duties of practical, every day life.

Oh! what a plodding, weary way it is when all spiritual commune is broken, early associations sundered, nothing but the "ingots and bales, the bird of Paradise flown!"

After Vernon's departure Oizelle became more listless, until finally one day in the school room her limbs began to shake, and she turned so pallid, the children ran frightened to the house for help. Mr. and Mrs. Gray came, but Oizelle smiled such a sad, sweet smile, and said:

"It is only a rigor; I'll get over it."

But Mr. Gray insisted she should go to her room. Mrs. Gray put her to bed, and fever rose higher and higher. The doctor came, and all nursed and watched faithfully; the fever raged days and days. The good old doctor became so interested in the case he stayed day and night. She lay like a broken lily; fever painted her cheeks, and her slender white hands lay quiet; her golden hair was sprinkled with gray, and her blue eyes would open with

a searching, wandering look and finally settle with a vacant stare on the dear old doctor, who would shake his head and keep his own counsel.

Mr. Gray finally asked: "Any hope, doctor?"

"For life? Yes."

"What then?"

"I am afraid her mind is gone."

Mind gone. Yes, lines all down; communication cut off with the outside world. In vain the imprisoned spirit cried, "Hello!" There was no respondent "hello."

At first the spirit was startled, so long its physical servants had obeyed its mandates.

But come, my brave spirit, you must get accustomed to your new situation! Your physical servants are all emancipated. Now reconstruct yourself! Look aloft! Maybe you can make connection with the spirit world! No need of wires up there.

Shout "Hello," beautiful spirit!

Father, mother, brother, lover, all are waiting to answer you!

Physical eyes closed. Spiritual eyes opened.

Ah, yes! She smiles!

"St. Clare, I'm coming!"

Dear old doctor, wipe away the big tear. Your patient is better. Mind gone to this world; made spiritual connection with the other!

Yes, Oizelle was well physically—fever gone; mind gone! And yet her strength came back, and she sat and wandered about, listless, beautiful!

The doctor said she was harmless, and Mr. Gray thought of the request of Vernon Terrill, knew he would be recompensed for all trouble, and so he left her undisturbed in her room.

She wandered about the house and yard. The children all loved her and ministered to her wants. The beautiful waxy mould that held the spirit was not offensive; and so she drifted from day to day. Yes, drifted! Like a new born infant opening its weak little eyes to the light, clutching its mother's finger, starting at the faintest sound.

One night the family had all retired, thinking Oizelle was asleep, as usual. Her room being across the hall from Mr. Gray, they felt no uneasiness concerning her.

It was a clear, starlight night, the whole firmament bespangled with stars.

Rising stealthily from her bed, she glided noiselessly to her door and locked it. Pushing open the blinds, she seated herself at the window, gazing out at the stars. As she sat, a heavenly smile illumined her whole countenance, and she listened, as if she heard music.

"St. Clare! St. Clare!" she said, in a low, musical voice. "I'm coming! I'm coming, my darling!"

Rising from the window, she busied herself about the room. Going to an old, battered Saratoga trunk, she lifted the lid, but finding it tied with a small grass rope, she went to work mechanically, without any intelligence whatever, but instinctively, and untied it, secured the old battered top, and lifted out the tray—a tray that Aunt Chloe used to say Angy didn't look strong enough to lift. But all was removed without the slightest exertion, and evidently Oizelle thought Angy had done it, for with the sweetest smile, she said:

"Thank you, Angy. I want that white party dress I wore at Saratoga. You dressed me so lovely that evening, Angy. You remember how St. Clare complimented me? I am going with him again, Angy. Be quick! I will be too late!"

And she laid out one garment after another, all smelling of camphor. A roll wrapped with unusual care arrested her attention. Quickly unfolding it, she shook it out—a beautiful white opera cloak, in spite of the camphor a little moth-eaten; but pressing it to her lips, she burst into a wild laugh and shouted, "I'm coming, St. Clare!"

Mrs. Gray turned in her sleep, thinking she heard an unusual sound, but it not being repeated, slept on.

Oizelle, with fingers as deft as Angy's, arrayed herself in full party costume, wrapped her cloak around her, then hesitated, saying, "He always loved my hair," and unfastening it, let it fall like a veil around her.

Silent she stood for a moment, as if waiting further directions. Her eyes wandered in search of something. Falling on the rope around her trunk, she snatched it joyfully, concealing it under her cloak.

She sprang up into the window, and holding out her hand, as if someone was there to assist her, she leaped to the ground and walked rapidly towards Fern Brook. Crossing, she passed on to the old Refugee cabin. The logs had all decayed and fallen. She seated herself on them and waited, smiling and bowing, as if surrounded by numerous friends; then rising quickly said, "I will," seemingly in assent to someone with her.

Then picking her way through vines and undergrowth to the Refugee graves, she dextrously threw the rope over a low limb of a tree. Stepping on a stump she had so often sat on near her mothers grave, she slipped her neck into the noose. Lifting her feet from the stump she cried,

"Father! St. Clare! I'm coming!"

A struggling, strangling, gurgling. The spirit burst its prison door and was free!

The stars twinkled, and the spiritual ear could hear the music of the spheres as that pure, bright spirit bounded to a reunion with the kindred spirits waiting her.

The next morning Mrs. Gray had not thought of the unusual noise she had heard, and as Oizelle always slept late, nothing was suspected, until a negro rushed wildly to the house, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" asked Mr. Gray.

"Oh! sir, the lady what stays here is hanging out yonder over the old Refugee graves."

"Impossible!" said Mr. Gray; but running to her room, and finding the door locked, all began to have the worst of fears.

Mr. Gray went round the house, climbed in the window; the bed was empty, trunk open, things scattered in all directions. He opened the door and walked out.

"It must be so."

"Of course, boss, aint I jes seen her; dressed all in white, and her long yaller hair just a streaming."

The neighbors were summoned, and the body of Oizelle taken down and carried to the house.

Mrs. Gray declared it was dressed fine enough for a wedding, much less a funeral, so she was laid out and buried in her Saratoga ball dress.

And, dear little Mrs. Gray, it may have been her wedding dress. How do we know that the spirit of her father didn't stand ready to receive her, and give her in marriage to her long lost, adored St. Clare?

The world said she was crazy and had committed suicide. What does the world know of it? The vulgar world.

Robbed of all incentives to live, who knows what hand guided her to her release?

Surely that refined, sensitive woman could not have accomplished her own execution without some preternatural aid.

One more grave added and Oizelle's body rested by that of her mother.

Scarce ten days had passed when Vernon Terrill, in response to Mr. Gray's telegram, stood over the new made grave. He was so shocked by the manner of her death, he found it impossible to realize it, and determined to have it exhumed and see once more the loved form he had cherished all these years. Determined, too, her body should rest in a coffin fitting the beautiful spirit that had left it.

Although assured by Mr. Gray that everything was neat and genteel, he was not satisfied. It would be a comfort to him to know and see she rested in magnificence suitable to her former position.

An undertaker from the nearest city was summoned, the body disinterred, and placed in a casket fit for the precious jewel.

It was a consolation to Vernon to look upon the still, sweet form, and know, as it was out of his power to comfort, she was now at rest.

But bitter were his thoughts as he looked on those lonely graves and thought of the father sleeping in a far

distant grave, of the ravished home, and of what "might have been."

He went away and in a few days returned with a monument to mark the spot, for he could not leave them alone and neglected.

Securing a right to the little mott of timber, he had an iron railing thrown around it, and in the center a towering octagon shaft of white marble, broken at the top, the pinnacle lying prone at the base, and engraved in large, deep letters :

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